



BULLETIN */lwva.com*

September 2026

Calendar

Tuesday September 1 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Massachusetts state primary election day. Early voting started August 22. Visit VOTE411 to learn about the candidates; see page 11 for details.
Saturday September 19	Town Day runs from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Volunteer at our table, or just stop by and say hello!
Wednesday October 7 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting via Zoom teleconference. The meeting URL will be sent to attendees; email one of the Co-Presidents if you would like to attend.

COME AND HELP OUT! LEAGUE TOWN DAY BOOTH SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

The end of summer means it's time to get ready for Arlington's Town Day. LWV Arlington will have a booth at this event that will be packed with information about voter registration, the November election, 2026 ballot questions (see also pages 9-11), precinct maps, proposed legislation, League membership, policies, and activities, and other voter service literature. We are looking for volunteers to work in 1- or 2-hour increments from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This is a great, fast-paced event, with two to three people at the booth at all times, so both seasoned and new League members are welcome to participate. If you can help out, please call Meredith Zona at 781-540-4473, or send an email to her at meredith.zona@stantec.com. We look forward to seeing you on Town Day!

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Co-President's Message

Where do I begin? Within this Bulletin are articles on lawsuits, legislative victories, and election related material. The LWVUS and/or the LWVMA, along with coalition partners, have certainly been active over the last few months. It makes me proud to be a League member.

The League has reserved a booth at Town Day where citizens will have the opportunity to register to vote and to find out the location of their polling place. Many residents new to Arlington and New England have no idea how the local government works and think that everyone votes at Town Hall. Material will be available on the nine ballot questions. Please visit the booth to chat and consider volunteering for a time slot between 10:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Arlington Votes signs have been distributed for the September 1 primary. If you would like to display a sign urging citizens to vote in the upcoming November election, please send me an email at carolynmparsons@msn.com.

Happy fall!

Carolyn Parsons

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members: Amy Ala, Deborah Barnes, Judie Jackson, and Donnarose Russian.

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2026–2027

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League of Women Voters, Campaign Legal Center Celebrate Victory as Court Blocks USCIS Rule

From the National League



On **August 3**, the District Court of Maryland temporarily blocked a US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) rule that prevented non-partisan civic engagement groups from registering new US citizens to vote at administrative naturalization ceremonies. The Court's preliminary injunction prevents the new rule from going into effect while the case is litigated.

The rule — which was issued abruptly in August 2025 and without factual basis — silenced the voices of Americans, but has been temporarily blocked following a lawsuit filed by Campaign Legal Center on behalf of the League of Women Voters (LWV) and a number of state and local Leagues. Now, civic engagement groups can continue the important work of educating and registering new Americans at administrative naturalization ceremonies — a longstanding tradition that encourages participation in the political process.

“When people become American citizens, they should be welcomed into full participation in civic life, not met with new barriers,” said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters. “For generations, the League has stood beside new citizens as they take the oath of citizenship and prepare to make their voices heard at the ballot box. Today’s ruling protects that fundamental democratic principle, and we will continue fighting to ensure every eligible voter can participate freely and fully in our democracy.”

“Any attempt to limit the freedom to vote is an attempt to silence American voters. This victory protects naturalized citizens’ access to the ballot box and the constitutional rights of civic organizations that help new citizens exercise their democratic freedoms,” said Anna Baldwin, director of voting rights litigation at the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center. “We’ll continue to fight in court to make this victory permanent and protect naturalized citizens and the groups that help welcome them into our democracy.”

The plaintiffs sued the administration for violating the First Amendment rights of the national League of Women Voters and state and local Leagues to engage in political speech and associational activities. The suit also addresses the administration’s failure to obey the Administrative Procedure Act that requires federal agencies to follow clearly defined and transparent procedures when adopting new policies.

As a result of USCIS’s rule change, state and local Leagues were forced to cancel hundreds of planned voter registration events, where League members and volunteers expected to register thousands of new voters. Since USCIS’s unlawful rule has been in place, state and local Leagues have been prohibited from attending and assisting new citizens in registering to vote for more than eight months. But with this Court victory, the League can now restart its important work with new citizens at administrative naturalization ceremonies.



To advertise in our Bulletin,
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Governor Healey Has Signed the PROTECT Act Into Law!

From the State League

It's time to celebrate a major legislative win! On **August 5**, Governor Healey signed the PROTECT Act (H.5620, <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H5620>), and its provisions are now law in Massachusetts. This law will make a significant difference for the Commonwealth's immigrant communities. Here is a summary of the PROTECT Act, put together by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA, <https://miracoalition.org/>):

- **Prohibits new 287(g) agreements:** ICE cannot deputize state or local law enforcement.
- **Creates protections for detained immigrants** in Massachusetts - and adds required access to free video conferencing for legal consultations and remote access to court hearing and proceedings.
- **Enforces specific limits on informal collaboration:** Police, sheriffs, and court officials and staff cannot:
 - question people or record information about immigration status
 - use state or local resources for civil immigration enforcement.
 - provide nonpublic personnel information about a person's custody status or upcoming court appearance, or provide advance notice of release from custody,
 - stop, arrest, search, seize, detain, or investigate for civil immigration enforcement purposes; cannot detain someone based on an ICE detainer
- **Ends courthouse arrests:** Prohibits civil immigration arrests in courthouses or on courthouse grounds, expansively defined.
- **Protects sensitive locations** by prohibiting civil immigration arrests without a judicial warrant in licensed and home childcare centers, public and charter schools and grounds, and the nonpublic areas of health care facilities and nursing homes; requires executive branch to issue model policies and training on how to interact with civil immigration enforcement officers.
- **Helps families prepare for emergencies** by allowing parents and legal guardians to pre-arrange guardianship for their children in the event of detention or deportation.
- **Creates a permanent immigration commission** to continue to monitor this work; MIRA will have a seat on this commission.

Thank you again for your tireless advocacy, not only for this bill, but for all the other League-supported legislation you do so much to help advance. The results can be huge.

Questions? Contact specialists@lwwma.org.

Freedom to Read Act Becomes Law in Massachusetts

From the State League

We are excited to report another major win in our legislative platform Defending The Commonwealth Against Federal Threats. S.2726, *An Act regarding free expression* (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S2726>), now known as the Freedom to Read Act, was signed into law on Monday, **August 10**.

As LWVMA Executive Director Celia Canavan articulated in the statewide press release: “Students using their school libraries and residents using their community libraries must know that they have access to the widest possible range of information and ideas. No person or group has the right to restrict the access of others to information. Never again will books be banned in the Commonwealth.”

As we testified, William Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch* became the last book to be “banned in Boston” when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1966 overruled a lower court finding that the book was obscene. The SJC based its decision on newly-issued obscenity guidelines from the United States Supreme Court. The decision ended censorship of the written word in Massachusetts going back to 1651, when the founder of Springfield was forced to return to England for criticizing Puritanism, censorship that flourished in the late 1800s and early 1900s, abetted by a group of private citizens, the Boston Watch & Ward Society, leading to the notorious “banned in Boston” label. We must remember history and not repeat it. Massachusetts must not permit censorship of words and thoughts. Banning books is antithetical to the concept of free speech and free thought, a bedrock of our Constitutional rights.

The final bill clarifies that school librarians are authorized to select library materials according to their professional training, and imposes a new process for any such materials to be challenged and removed.

Congratulations and thank you to legislative specialist Nancy Brumback for her expert testimony and former specialist Carolyn Lee for starting the work.

Legislative Win! Abortion Decisions Between Patients and Doctors Are Now the Law in Massachusetts

From the State League

We are thrilled to report another major win in our legislative platform **Defending The Commonwealth Against Federal Threats**. H.5595, *An Act prioritizing patient access to care* (<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/H5595>), was signed into law on Monday, **August 10**. The Commonwealth leads the nation in ensuring access to reproductive healthcare.

An Act prioritizing patient access to care offers an important update to the statute governing abortion care later in pregnancy, to allow this care based on the professional judgment of physicians. This bill removes restrictive language on late-term abortions and leaves these critical and often devastating decisions to patients and their physicians. It allows collaboration between doctors and patients that focuses on health, safety and compassion. Forcing patients to travel out of state for this care is not only costly, but increasingly dangerous in a post-Roe world.

The League of Women Voters believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. The League supports treating abortion as a medical procedure to be decided upon by a patient and their physician. Since 1972, LWVMA has supported the freedom of individuals to make informed reproductive decisions based on their own convictions and beliefs. The League has long supported efforts to ensure equitable access to quality health care.

As you know, this was one of our top five bills for Day on the Hill. Thank you for contacting your legislators through two Action Alerts this past legislative session. We also conducted an email campaign urging all Senators to enact the bill swiftly before the end of the formal legislative session.

Congratulations and thank you to legislative specialists Jan Soma and Tracy Brown for their work on this mission critical bill!

Federal Court Grants Emergency Relief Blocking USPS From Implementing Newly-Finalized Mail Ballot Rule For November Election

From the National League

On **August 27**, a federal court granted voting rights organizations' emergency request to block the US Postal Service (USPS) from implementing the newly-finalized mail ballot rule for the November midterm elections. That rule would assign USPS an unprecedented and illegal gate-keeping role in the administration of mail voting, and jeopardize the delivery of mail-in ballots to many voters. The temporary restraining order will remain in place for 14 days while the parties brief the pending motion for a preliminary injunction.

The plaintiffs in this case, *League of Women Voters of Massachusetts v. Trump*, are the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, League of Women Voters, Association of Americans Resident Overseas, U.S. Vote Foundation, OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. They are represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Massachusetts, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, Legal Defense Fund, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC, and LatinoJustice PRLDEF.

On **Aug. 11**, 2026, the court issued an order in *League of Women Voters of Massachusetts v. Trump*, blocking USPS from implementing Section 3 of the executive order, regulating mail voting, for the upcoming Nov. 3 midterm elections. On **Aug. 24**, the Supreme Court stayed a different court order issued in the separate *Trump v. California* case blocking the implementation of the executive order, reasoning that it was premature for the California plaintiffs to bring that case before USPS issued a final rule implementing the order. On **Aug. 26**, the district court vacated the injunction in *League of Women Voters of Massachusetts* based on the Supreme Court's stay decision, but allowed plaintiff organizations to amend their complaint to reflect the fact that USPS has now issued the final mail ballot rule. Plaintiff organizations then supplemented their original complaint to do exactly that, adding challenges to the newly finalized mail ballot rule and seeking immediate emergency relief on those claims.

In their papers, the plaintiff organizations argued that USPS' newly-finalized mail ballot rule violates the Constitution's separation of powers, which put the states and Congress in charge of election rules, not USPS or the president. The final rule also violates a number of the laws that govern how USPS operates. The plaintiffs sought emergency relief because these violations are causing irreparable harm to plaintiff organizations, their members, and the voters they serve each day that USPS is allowed to proceed with the new mail ballot rule, which is all the more severe as there are now fewer than 70 days before the November midterm elections.

Today, the court agreed that plaintiff organizations were likely to succeed in their claims that USPS lacked the authority to issue the final rule and that the final rule unconstitutionally imposed election requirements on the states. Noting that the "record continues to lack any evidence regarding fraudulent absentee or mail-in voting," the Court emphasized, "USPS's interest in correcting an unsubstantiated problem through likely unconstitutional means is dwarfed by the overwhelming risk of pervasive disenfranchisement of citizens who need access to mail ballots in order to vote." In light of this immediate and irreparable harm, the Court granted emergency relief, ordering defendants to take no steps to prepare, implement, or enforce several sections of the final rule for 14 days. In the interim, the parties will fully brief the plaintiff organizations' request for a preliminary injunction. A hearing on that motion has been set for Sept 3, 2026.

2026 Ballot Question Guidance for Local Leagues

From the State League

A record-tying nine measures will appear on November 3 ballot:

- Question 1: Expanding the Public Records Law
- Question 2: Collective Bargaining for CPCS Employees
- Question 3: State Primary Elections
- Question 4: Election Day Registration
- Question 5: State Revenue Limit & Rebate
- Question 6: Natural Resource Conservation Fund
- Question 7: Single Family Homes
- Question 8: Prohibit Retail Sale of Adult Recreational Use Marijuana
- Question 9: Firearms Regulation

LWVMA Stances

How did the League reach their stands? Review how the LWVMA Board voted: <https://lwvma.org/lwvma-statement-on-2026-ballot-questions/>.

LWVMA Supports

Question 1: Expanding the Public Records Law

This proposed law would make most records held by the Legislature and the Office of the Governor public records under the Massachusetts Public Records Law. LWVMA supports this question. The League believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

Question 4: Election Day Registration

This proposed law would permit eligible individuals to register to vote or update their voter registration information on Election Day; the current registration cutoff is 10 days before an election. LWVMA supports this question. The right to vote for every eligible American has been a fundamental League principle since its origin.

Question 7: Zoning of Single Family Homes

This proposed law would allow single-family homes to be built on smaller lots in a residentially zoned area according to specific guidelines. It allows municipalities to regulate certain aspects of those single-family homes.

LWVMA supports this question. The League believes government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment. Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted. Government, industry, and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.

Question 9: Firearms Regulation: Vote YES to uphold the current law

LWVMA is participating in the Vote Yes for a Safe Massachusetts campaign (<https://www.yesforasafema.com/>) to defeat the Massachusetts Firearm Regulations Referendum. This is a veto referendum to repeal An Act Modernizing Firearms Laws. LWVMA supported the passage of this law during the previous legislative session. A YES vote upholds the law as is. A NO vote repeals the law. Learn more and take action via the Yes campaign website.

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2026 Ballot Question Guidance (Continued)

LWVMA Focuses on Yes on 4 and Yes on 9

LWVMA is dedicating resources to **Yes on 4: Election Day Registration** and **Yes on 9: Firearms Regulation**. View the recording of Yes for a Safe MA: Defend the 2024 Gun Law virtual event at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYBcA98qDAc&t=306s>. Stay tuned for more details, and visit <https://www.yesforasafema.com/>.

LWVMA Opposes

Question 5: State Revenue Limit & Rebate

This proposed law would change the limit on how much revenue the state can collect in a given year. If revenues exceed that limit, the law triggers a refund to taxpayers. LWVMA opposes this question. The League supports the use of certain commonly-accepted criteria in judging taxes, particularly equitability, economic effect, flexibility, ease and cost of collection, and adequacy of yield: Taxes should provide adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes. The League also supports a greater reliance on state-collected taxes to reduce the dependence on the property tax.

LWVMA Takes No Position

Question 2: Collective Bargaining for CPCS Employees

This proposed law would permit employees of the Committee for Public Counsel Services to engage in collective bargaining. LWVMA has no position on collective bargaining and therefore takes no position on this question.

Question 3: State Primary Elections

Implementing All Party State Primaries or Top 2 would eliminate political party primaries for state elections and instead establish a system where there would be a single primary in which all candidates, regardless of their party affiliation, would be listed on one ballot, and voters could vote for any candidate on the ballot. The two candidates receiving the most votes for each office in the primary would advance to the general election ballot. This proposed law would require candidates for governor and lieutenant governor to run and be listed jointly on the ballot in the primary.

LWVMA takes no position on this question. The LWV voting systems position can be interpreted to both support and oppose this question. Due to the ambiguity of the LWV voting systems position, the Board decided to focus on educating voters on the proposal. LWVMA will host a voter service education event for members and the public on Question 3 in September. Stay tuned for details.

Question 6: Natural Resource Conservation Fund

This proposed law would establish a Nature for All Fund that would designate state taxes collected from the sale and use of sporting goods, recreational vehicles, and golf courses for natural resources conservation.

LWVMA takes no position on this question. Despite LWV's overwhelming number of positions supporting protections for the environment and natural resources, the crux of this question lies with earmarking sales tax revenue for a specific purpose. The League opposes

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2026 Ballot Question Guidance (Continued)

earmarking specific revenues for specific purposes. If an earmarking measure were proposed, the League would support that it be statutory instead of constitutional, be subject to periodic review and “sunset” provisions that limit the duration of such designation as well as allow the reversion of the earmarked revenues to the general fund.

Question 8: Prohibit Retail Sale of Adult Recreational Use Marijuana

This proposed law would recriminalize recreational marijuana sales and use. LWVMA has no position on this topic and therefore takes no position on this question.

What is VOTE411?

From the State League

Created in 2006, VOTE411 is a “one-stop shop” for trusted, reliable election-related information.

You can create a personalized ballot by entering your address into <https://www.vote411.org/>. You'll see upcoming elections in your district, candidate information, and candidate responses to questions curated by LWVMA's VOTE411 Questions Subcommittee. This tool helps candidates share their positions directly with the voters they hope to represent.

At <https://www.vote411.org/check-registration>, you can check your voter registration to ensure you are an active and eligible voter. This is especially important if you have moved, changed your name, or did not vote in the last election.

After confirming your voter status, it's time to vote! You can visit <https://www.vote411.org/make-your-plan> to find your polling location and explore what voting will look like on election day.

For Massachusetts rules on voting, online registration, and absentee ballots, visit <https://www.vote411.org/massachusetts>.

Membership Dues Information

By Ann FitzGerald

LWVA members no longer receive written reminders of dues renewals on April 1. The League of Women Voters of the US (<https://www.lwv.org/>) should now send out a reminder to you. Dues are divided between the national, state, and local leagues.

You should have received a notice to register at the LWVUS portal. if you didn't receive it, you can go to the portal and register yourself. Go to <https://www.lwv.org/> and click Member Log In. Your name was sent to LWVUS for renewal purposes and is listed on the membership roster. The site is secure and has a verification process.

The LWVUS portal requests dues of \$75, but you can contribute any amount over \$20.

If you prefer to renew by check, you will be a member of the LWVA only, not the state or national League. Make out a check for \$60 to "League of Women Voters of Arlington" and send it to me:

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Call me at 781-646-9711 or email annfitz@rcn.com if you have questions.

September 2026

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