



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

LWVL December First Friday

League Forum: What's Up in Downtown Lexington? – Part 2

What are some of the Lexington Center zoning changes being proposed? What's happening with the Dana Home? The League of Women Voters First Friday Forum on December 2 will be back at the Cary Library with background on these proposals that may come before the 2012 Town Meeting in the spring.

Lexington Center zoning change proposals will be presented by Committee Chair Jerry Michelson joined by committee members Howard Levin and Fred Johnson of the zoning subcommittee. Also, Trisha Kennealy will discuss her proposal for the Dana Home which will require a zoning change that will be debated and voted at the March Town Meeting. The forum will be moderated by Planning Board member Wendy Manz.

This is the third in a series of 2011-2012 First Friday Forums hosted by the League of Women Voters of Lexington to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Coffee will be available at 9:15 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:30 in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue. The library is easily accessible by Lexpress and from the Minuteman Bikeway. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

LWVMA Phonathon

The League thanks the donors who participated in the recent phonathon and the following members who made phone calls: Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti, Pat Costello, Sandy Gasbarro, Jeanne Krieger, Wendy Manz, Lisa Smith and Melinda Walker.

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LWVL January First Friday

League Forum: Yes for Our Schools - January 6, 2012

As the planning continues watch for information updates via e-blasts and visit our website to view more details.

LWVL Debt Exclusion Information Session January 12 at Clarke Middle School

The campaign for debt exclusions to finance the renovation of Bridge and Bowman schools and the replacement of Estabrook School received key support recently when the League of Women Voters of Lexington board unanimously voted to endorse Yes for Our Schools. "These projects will make needed safety upgrades and improve the learning environments for our children," said the League's Margaret Bradley in a statement. "They are practical, vital projects, and are being undertaken in the most financially responsible way possible. The League urges Lexington voters to become educated about the upcoming debt exclusion referendum and to vote YES on both questions on January 24, 2012.

Yes for Our Schools Campaign

Angela (Jere) Frick (1917-2011)

On Tuesday November 22, Lexington and the League lost a great friend and compassionate conservationist. Jere served on the Conservation Commission for 46 years and championed the purchase and preservation of much of the Conservation Land we now take for granted. Her most recent endeavor was to help protect the 48 acres of Lot 1 of the Middlesex County Hospital campus.

Not only was Jere intrepid and passionate when it came to land preservation, but she had a great sense of humor and enjoyed life to its fullest. I loved to call her and hear her voice mail message, "You have reached the home of Jere and Angela Frick. Please leave a message for either of us."

Jeanne Krieger

LWVMA

LWVMA Legislative Priorities:

HB 1106: An Act to Establish Election Day Registration

Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Election Laws in support by Linda Freedman, LWVMA Specialist in Elections and Voting, November 2, 2011

The League of Women Voters urges you to support "An Act to Establish Election Day Registration." The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy, and voting should be as

easy and accessible as possible. The National Voter Registration Act also known as the Motor Voter Registration Act states that citizens of the United States have a fundamental right to vote.

Lead Sponsors: Representatives Gloria L. Fox and Jennifer E Benson

Background: Election Day registration (EDR) is currently working in eight states – Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. In the 2007-2008 session, the bill passed in the Senate by a 33 to 5 vote. It remained in the House Ways and Means Committee, but failed to reach the House Floor before the end of the 115th session. It has been refiled in 2009 and 2011.

Until recently, Maine was as an EDR state. While Maine has a history of EDR working effectively to increase voter participation for thirty years, Maine's current governor and legislature overturned same day registration. There were charges of registration fraud due to EDR; these have been thoroughly investigated by the Secretary of State and found to be false. The current bill has been modified to meet concerns expressed by city and town clerks. It includes the formation of an advisory committee on the implementation of EDR. The committee will study resources and costs associated with EDR and the feasibility of providing every polling location with real-time electronic access to the central registry of voters.

Purpose of the Bill: The bill will allow any eligible voter to register and vote in local, statewide, and national elections at their local polling place on Election Day. At the time of registration, the individual must provide proof of identify and residency. The voter must also sign an oath as certifying citizenship, age, and lack of any impediments that would prohibit him/her from voting. This includes substantial penalties for giving false information.

Benefits of EDR

EDR increases voter participation - In 2006, 5 of the 7 states with EDR made the year's list of top 10 voter-turnout states; and EDR states had a turnout rate of 50.9%, non-EDR states had a turnout rate of 41.6%. The Brennan Center for Justice reported that Maine, Minnesota and Wisconsin had average voter turnout rates that were 12% higher than the national average.

- Registered Voters benefit from EDR. It alleviates the problem of registered voters being turned away because of inaccurate or incomplete voter lists. A 2003 MIT/Caltech Voting Technology Project report found that 122,000 registered Massachusetts voters did not cast ballots in 2000 due to registration problems. The MIT Cal Tech Project estimates that as many as 3 million US citizens were disenfranchised by wrongful purging of voter rolls or failure to add newly registered voters to the lists. With EDR, they could have re-registered at the polls.
- Election officials benefit from EDR - It shifts the administrative burden of processing new voter registrations from the busy pre-election session to after Election Day, a much less hectic time for election officials. Election officials in EDR states report that the work of adding newly-registered voters to the rolls has been manageable and relatively inexpensive.
- EDR does not increase voter fraud. Multiple independent studies by, among others, the Brennan Center for Justice, Demos and the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office, found that voter fraud is as low in EDR states as it is in non-EDR states. The amount of voter fraud has been greatly exaggerated by opponents of EDR and may be a "red herring". Most voter misconduct is due to confusion and ignorance rather than any intent to deceive.
- EDR may eliminate the need for Provisional Ballots. They have been controversial and are not always counted. Provisional Ballots can be problematic in close elections.

- Voting should be as easy as possible. EDR allows students, young adults, new residents and others who move to vote in greater numbers. Estimates from the Brennan Center are an average increase of 5 to 7 % in the number of voters when EDR is implemented.
- EDR is not a partisan issue and has not been a burden where used. With proper consultation with election officials and poll worker training, it can be implemented and used effectively. In this bill, the hours for EDR are 9 to 5 on election day and do not interfere with poll closing operations.
- Joan Grove, former Secretary of State of Minnesota, stated, “The system, as much as people think it [does], does not belong to the political candidates, ... to the political parties and...the election administrators. It belongs to the electorate.”

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts strongly urges the Joint Committee on Election Laws to pass House Bill 1106 out of Committee with a positive vote and do everything you can to make it the law in Massachusetts.

If you would like to be kept up to date on legislation the League is working on, sign up for the Action Alerts LWVMA distributes when votes on these bills are coming up. Join the Action Alert email list by contacting lwwma@lwwma.org. You can also find more detailed information on the legislation we are following on our website, www.lwwma.org.

LWVUS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear League Leader:

Today, the LWV, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) released the results of a poll by Public Policy Polling. The poll was conducted nationwide with particular emphasis on voters in California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and was designed to measure support for the EPA. Overwhelmingly, voters, especially women voters, expressed their faith in the EPA and their support for stronger standards to protect the public from toxics in our air.

Opponents of the EPA have relentlessly cited the agency as the prime example of big government interference with business and blamed the agency for job losses and over regulation. Well, what the corporate polluters and their supporters in Congress are selling, the American voter is not buying. There is a clear consensus around the country that protecting the public health through reasonable federal regulation is an important government function and there is no need to choose between jobs and the environment.

Opposing big corporate interests is never easy, and the job never ends, but the League has never shied away from holding officials accountable to the public. We have many tools at our disposal from the Clean Air Promise to the issues we ask candidates for public office to discuss in our forums, debates and voter guides.

Voters who take the time to respond to polls are sending a message to Congress and to the President. That message is no surprise to League members. For over 90 years the League has understood the relationship between public health and well-being and our democracy's health and well-being.

We can never give up!

In League,
Elisabeth MacNamara

ADDITIONAL LWFVUS INFORMATION

ADVOCACY

League President Testifies Before House Judiciary Committee Forum on Voting Laws Changes (NEW)

On Monday, November 14, LWFVUS President MacNamara was on the Hill to present this testimony on the effect of recent voting legislation passed by a number of states in 2011. If you missed the live airing, you may now view her presentation [here](#) (her statement begins about 30 minutes into the program). Among the numerous media reports were those from the Huffington Post, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and Governing Magazine.

League Opposes Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution (NEW)

The League of Women Voters joined with 277 organizations in a letter to members of the House and Senate opposing passage of a so-called Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution. The League has long opposed the balanced budget amendment as a danger to the economy and the balance of powers between the three branches of government.

New LWFVUS Website to Launch on December 1, 2011

The national League is proud to announce the launch of our new website, www.lwv.org on Thursday, December 1. We've built and designed the website as part of our plans to modernize the way we inform and interact with the public. One of our goals in creating this new site was to grow the community connected with the League and to raise more resources to do our work that is critical for the health of our democracy. It is our hope, as we head into an important election year, that the new site will assist us in better showcasing the collective and vital work done by the League at local, state and national levels to serve the voters and defend our democracy. The new website has a members area that provides Leagues and members with tools and templates to help you more easily do your work in running the League. Please be sure to visit the site next week and help us spread the word!

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the January 2012 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at Nancor1106@gmail.com by December 26th.

Dates to Save:

December 2 LWVL First Friday at Cary Memorial Library

January 6 LWVL First Friday

January 12 LWVL Debt Exclusion Information Session
Clarke Middle School

January 24 Debt Exclusion Referendum Vote



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