



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

LWVL APRIL FIRST FRIDAY FORUM MOVED TO APRIL 13

League Forum - Getting Around Town: Do you really need to drive?

A variety of perspectives about transportation issues and opportunities in and around Lexington will be presented at the League of Women Voters monthly forum which has been moved to the second Friday, April 13.

What can be done about the increasing traffic congestion on our streets? What are the differing transportation needs of students, their parents, seniors, commuters, and businesses? How will the proposed MBTA cuts affect bus service in Lexington and LexPress? How will the increasing price of gas affect transportation choices in the future?

Panelists will include Rick Abrams, ACROSS Lexington; Lexington Transportation Services Coordinator Jeanette Rebecchi; Monica Tibbits, Executive Director, 128 Business Council; and liaisons to the ad hoc School Transportation and Safety Study Committee: Selectman Deb Mauger and School Committee member Jessie Steigerwald. Michelle Ciccolo of the Planning Board will act as moderator.

This is the seventh 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.

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SAVE THE DATE:

The LWVL's will hold its Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 7, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at Brookhaven. The theme of this year's meeting is Lexington's 300th Celebration and our guest speaker is Susan Rockwell, Chair of the Celebrations Committee. Please plan to attend.

LWVMA

LWVMA Calendar

April 11: Lotte E. Scharfman Trustee Meeting, 12pm-2pm, 133 Portland Street

April 23: LWVMA Board Meeting, 11:30am-2:30pm, 133 Portland Street

April 25: LWVMA Day on the Hill, 10am-Noon, State House

May 5: LWVMA Council

May 17: Public Forum: Pushing Back on Money Politics, 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Concord-Carlisle High School, 500 Walden St., Concord

June 8-12: LWVUS Convention

Come to Day on the Hill April 25

9:30am - Noon

Democracy in Danger: Money, Media and Manipulation

All League members are invited to attend our annual Day on the Hill program on Wednesday morning, April 25, 2012, at the Massachusetts State House.

Registration starts at 9:30am in Gardner Auditorium with the program beginning at 10:00 am and ending at noon.

We are very excited to welcome the following speakers whose extensive knowledge and experience should generate many questions from our attendees: Pam Wilmot, Executive Director of Common Cause, Robert Kuttner, Journalist and Boston Globe columnist, and Jay Kaufman, Massachusetts State Representative.

Following the speakers, LWVMA Specialists will update us on legislation of interest to the League. After our program, plan to meet with your Senators and Representatives. We will distribute details on the bills and specific talking points on our website and through email to all LWVMA members soon.

Lobbying the state legislature is one of the defining activities of the League of Women Voters, and everyone who shows up in person makes an enormous difference in the success of our legislative efforts. Get together with friends in your League and plan to participate in this year's Day on the Hill!

LWVMA Proposed Advocacy Policy

At last May's convention, this resolution was passed: Be it resolved that before June 30, 2012, the LWVMA board will draft a written policy with regard to its own advocacy to be presented to local Leagues for their input and approval.

An ad hoc committee has drafted such a policy, and it has been reviewed by the Governance Committee. You can read that proposed policy [here](#). The ad hoc committee would like local Leagues to take a look and let us know by April 30 if you have any comments and if you approve this policy, which commits the state board to communicate with local Leagues, seek their feedback and provide the necessary information and materials before any major new advocacy action apart from the routine advocacy and lobbying functions of the League, is undertaken (item 6 under Advocacy in this policy).

Please send your comments and approval to advocacypolicy@lwwma.org by the end of April.

Public Forum: Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012 May 17, 2012

Concerned about the big spending in the 2012 political campaigns? Is money putting our democracy at risk?

Hear a panel of experts on this issue: Lawrence Lessig, Roy L. Furman Professor of Law and Leadership, Harvard Law School, and Director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University; Jeff Clements, attorney and author of *Corporations Are Not People*; and Mimi Marziani, Counsel for the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law.

They will be speaking at a public forum, Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012 on Thursday, May 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m., at the Concord-Carlisle High School, 500 Walden Street, Concord.

Moderating the conversation will be Tom Ashbrook, host of *On Point*, a production of 90.9 WBUR, Boston's NPR news station. The forum is free and open to the public, with doors opening at 7:00 p.m. No reserved seating.

Questions from the audience will be taken after the panel discussion.

Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012 is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle (LWVCC), the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, and 90.9 WBUR. It is part of a LWVCC project, Democracy in the Balance: Money, Speech & Power. For more information about the May 17 public forum, contact Pushingback@lwwcc.org or 978-254-1598.

LWVMA Council 2012: Challenges to Democracy: Protecting Voter Rights and the Influence of Money

Plans are underway for Council 2012, May 5 at Lasell College in Newton. Registration and other information will be available at a later date. Council will feature morning workshops, lunch and a keynote speaker and an afternoon plenary session.

This year's theme was chosen by a survey in November's League Leader Update, and survey respondents also indicated their preferences for workshop topics. The most popular workshop choices were "Multi-League Candidate Nights (Congressional Races)," "How to work with your legislator and LWVMA's current issues," and "Share the success--membership and leadership." The Council planning committee will do its best to develop workshops on these topics.

Legislative Update

Bills Supported by LWVMA That Have Received Positive Votes:

Referred to House Ways & Means for financial review:

HB 1858 - An Act to promote Financial Stability and Asset Development, which establishes certain financial benefits to individuals and families receiving state assistance.

HB 84/SB 34 - An Act to bring Child Support Home, which makes technical changes to regulations regarding child support payments.

Referred to Senate Ways & Means for financial review:

SB 2173 - An Act Preventing Students from Dropping out of School, which raises the dropout age to 18 (prior SB 185).

SB 2079 - An Act for a Competitive Economy through Safer Alternatives to Toxic Chemicals (prior HB 1136/SB 397)

SB 2078 - An Act to Require Producer Responsibility for Collection and Recycling of Discarded Electronic Products (prior SB 166)

Referred to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing for further review:

HB 2368/SB 1133 - An Act Relative to Certified Professional Midwives

HB 1469 - An Act Relative to Patient Safety, which promotes nursing education and staffing levels.

Will proceed to the appropriate chamber for a vote.

HB196 - An Act to Ensure Secure Voting Equipment, which mandates all electronic voting systems use a paper ballot and have manual audit capabilities.

SB 313 - An Act to Establish Risk-based Audits of Election Results.

LWVUS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear League Leader:

Whether it's Stand Your Ground laws, anti-immigration legislation or voter ID, the role of special interest money in government at all levels is becoming more and more pervasive. However connecting the dots of influence peddling is not easy. The average voters cast their ballots amidst a barrage of negative, misleading and even false campaign ads paid for by innocuous sounding groups that obscure the true sources of their funding. The Center for Public Integrity recently published a report rating state legislation regarding ethics in government and transparency. The picture is not pretty.

At the Federal level, this election season has seen a new low in messaging and a new high in spending by so-called independent groups. Following Citizens United, one of the remaining avenues of reform is disclosure of the sources of that spending. While the Supreme Court was hearing oral argument in suits challenging the Affordable Care Act, the Senate is hearing testimony on the DISCLOSE Act. The League supports this Act, as do an overwhelming number of voters. Corporations, unions and individuals who spend money in elections must be required to stand by their ads and allow voters to know who is trying to influence their vote.

The League is taking a strong stand on money in politics. Support for DISCLOSE, petitioning the White House for a response on the FEC and demanding elected officials let the sun shine in at all levels of government is a good start. The LWVUS Board created a Campaign Finance Task Force. As expected, we found great talent and expertise among our members. The resulting task force has a lot to do and the skills to do it.

Campaign finance was not the only focus of the Board meeting last week. The Board approved a new position as well as the first proposed biennial budget and recommended program. The position on the Federal Role in Public Education is included in this update. Remaining recommendations to Convention will be posted in upcoming weeks.

Speaking Out in League,
Elisabeth MacNamara

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the May 2012 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at Nancor1106@gmail.com by April 25th.

Dates to Save:

- April 13 LWVL First Friday – Transportation, Anything But Your Car
- April 14 LWVMA League Leaders Lunch, 11 am-3 pm, Amherst
- April 25 LWVMA Day on the Hill, 10am-Noon, State House
- May 5 LWVMA Council
- May 17 Public Forum: Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012



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