



BULLETIN, May, 2021

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

MAY FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, MAY 7, 2021: **RECREATION PROGRAMS IN LEXINGTON**

On Friday, May 7, 2021 at 9:30 AM, the First Friday Forum will offer information about recreation in Lexington in the coming year. Melissa Battite, Director of Recreation & Community Programs for the Town of Lexington, will provide an update on programs, services, capital plans, and reopening plans for 2021. This will include the outdoor recreation facilities such as fields, courts, golf, and swimming opportunities in addition to indoor programs at the Community Center. Ms. Battite will also share an overview of the Town's new initiatives and successes achieved despite the impacts of the pandemic.

This program will be the eighth in the 2020-2021 First Friday Forum series. As always, there will be time for Q & A following the presentation, and the webinar will be live streamed on Facebook, LWV Lexington MA. It will also be recorded and available on LexMedia at a later date. For more information about the webinar, assistance using Zoom, or more information about the League please go to <http://www.lwvlexington.org/FirstFriday.html>.

LEXINGTON LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING IN JUNE

The League of Women Voters of Lexington will hold its Annual Meeting on Monday evening, June 7, 2021, at 7:00 pm on Zoom. We will conduct our annual business meeting, including approval of a budget and election of officers and members of the board, from 7:00 - 7:30 pm.

At 7:30 pm we will welcome Dr. William Moomaw, Emeritus Professor of International Environmental Policy at the Fletcher School, and Co-Director of the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University. He is also the Distinguished Visiting Scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research center.

After addressing stratospheric ozone depletion as a staff scientist for the U.S. Senate, Dr. Moomaw began working on climate change in 1988 as the first director of the climate program at World Resources Institute in Washington DC. He has been a lead author of five Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Reports. The IPCC shared the Nobel Peace Prize for its climate work in 2007. He is currently identifying natural climate solutions that increase accumulation of carbon in forests, wetlands and soils to more rapidly meet climate goals. Dr. Moomaw is a co-author of a recent paper declaring a Climate Emergency that has been endorsed by over 13,000 scientists.

At the Annual Meeting, Dr. Moomaw will focus on the importance of Massachusetts forests and their role in addressing climate change and stemming biodiversity loss. The climate legislation recently signed into law by Governor Baker calls for Massachusetts to achieve zero net carbon by 2050, which will require our forests and other natural systems to accumulate more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than we add from any remaining fossil fuel use and industrial processes. Dr. Moomaw's topic will be: "Massachusetts forests are essential for meeting our climate goals: Are they up to the task?" As always, time will be allowed for question from the audience.

This League event is open to the public at no charge, however registration is required at <http://www.lwvlexington.org>.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization dedicated to the principles of self-government established in the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

For more information visit our website at www.lwvlexington.org or contact League convener Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.

IDEA FOR MOTHER'S DAY

May 9 is Mother's Day. Here's an idea for the mothers (and daughters, sisters and nieces!) in your life: How about a membership in the League of Women Voters? As League members, it's a great way to pass on our enthusiasm for civic life and to encourage coming generations to get involved in building and supporting democracy.

Find a list of Massachusetts Leagues at <https://lwvma.org/leagues-in-massachusetts/massachusetts-leagues/>.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA ADVOCACY EVENTS

MIRA'S 25th ANNUAL IMMIGRANTS' DAY, MAY 4

The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition sponsors an annual Immigrants' Day, traditionally held at the Massachusetts State House. This year's 25th annual event will be held by Zoom on May 4 from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm. The Massachusetts League of Women Voters has long supported MIRA and provided advocacy and support for its proposed legislation.

This year the League's priority bills include [the Safe Communities Act \(H.2418/S.1579\)](#) and [the Driving Families Forward Act \(H.3456/S.2289\)](#). For details on these bills, see last month's Bulletin.

The Immigrants' Day speakers' program runs from 11 to 11:40 am, and will feature comments from Boston Acting Mayor Kim Janey; Senate President Pro Tempore William N. Brownsberger; and Representative Ruth B. Balser. Gabriel Camacho, Political Director of UFCW 1445, and Dalida Rocha, Political Director of SEIU 32BJ will also participate. The speaking program will be followed at 11:45 am by Regional Roundtables hosted jointly by League members and key legislators, for an informal exchange on shared issues, concerns, and opportunities.

Register for this event at <https://actionnetwork.org/events/immigrants-day-virtually-at-the-state-house-2021/>. You can get more information from LWVMA Legislative Specialist Jennifer Muroff at jenmuroff@gmail.com.

VIRTUAL LOBBY DAY, MAY 11

On Tuesday, May 11, the LWVMA will be hosting a Virtual Lobby Day on Zoom from Noon to 1:30 pm to support the [VOTES Act \(H.805/S.459\)](#). This legislation will make permanent Massachusetts election reforms that were enacted on a temporary basis for last fall's elections, including expanded voting by mail and same day registration. For more details on the VOTES Act, see last month's Bulletin.

The League is urging the Joint Committee on Election Laws to hold a hearing on this bill promptly, so that it can be brought to the floor for a vote this summer, and be in place for the next round of municipal elections. A strong showing from League members at the Lobby Day will encourage our legislators to move on this legislation.

To register and receive a Zoom link: go to [VOTES Act Virtual Lobby Lunch](#) by pasting the following web address into your browser:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSekHrZtRdN7aiUNvZPIF3TARaaxU_jOYduROHWtjQTkFAHF-A/viewform?fbzx=-4675862541934748727.

Questions can be addressed to LWVMA Legislative Specialist Nancy Brumback at Nancy.Brumback@gmail.com.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

REMINDER: LWVUS COUNCIL ON ZOOM JUNE 24-27, 2021

The second annual League-wide gathering to be conducted on Zoom will feature interactive break-out sessions on current topics, updates on local League initiatives, and important guest speakers, in addition to the annual business of the LWVUS. See next month's Bulletin for more details. For immediate information on the 2021 Council contact our [LWVMA Office](#) at 857 452-1715.

CIVIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner, JD, was one of the keynote speakers who addressed a virtual national Civic Health Conference on April 23-24. The Conference, attended by social workers, policymakers, nurses, students, academics and others, gathered to consider a range of topics through the community health lens, including local elections and community organizing. Dr. Turner's experience as both a gynecological oncologist and a nationally recognized voting rights advocate gave her unique qualifications to contribute to the Conference.

LWVUS ADVOCACY

STATEHOOD FOR WASHINGTON, D.C.

In April, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the [Washington, D.C. Admission Act \(HR 51\)](#) which would create a 51st state from the residential and commercial areas of the District of Columbia, enfranchising some 700,000 D.C. residents for the first time. The League has been a strong advocate for this legislation, as LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase stated:

DC statehood is not a partisan issue but a civil rights issue which cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice. As DC is a jurisdiction with a majority population of Black and Brown people, continued efforts to block full representation is discrimination against the people who live, work, and pay taxes in the District...It is long past time that we dispel these racist and discriminatory excuses and deliver justice to the residents of our nation's capital.

The bill now goes to the Senate. Encourage your Senators to support it.

LWVUS SUPPORTS ENDING THE FILIBUSTER

The LWVUS supports the elimination of the filibuster in the U.S. Senate. LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase has issued the following statement:

The League of Women Voters calls on the US Senate to amend the filibuster rule that continues to stand in the way of progress for the American people. The League has a history of calling for filibuster reform to ensure a functioning democracy. In 2011, the League called for filibuster reform to end gridlock and partisan warfare in the Senate. Today, we are seeking the same reform to limit obstruction.

The American voters elected senators to legislate, not use outdated, arbitrary rules to obstruct our democracy. The Senate filibuster is a Jim Crow relic, historically used to protect the South's dependence on slave labor and later to defend segregation and block civil rights legislation.

The League supports reforming the filibuster to prohibit a minority party from blocking opening debate of a bill. We support instituting a "talking filibuster," ending silent holds, putting the onus on minority parties to produce 40 votes, and lowering the cloture vote threshold to bring bills to a final up-or-down vote on the Senate floor.

As long as senators can hide behind the filibuster, they are not beholden to the American people. Under current rules, senators far too often abuse the filibuster to delay important legislation and conceal debate behind closed doors

This does a disservice to our democracy. The American voters deserve to see which of their elected senators are obstructing a vote on issues that matter to our communities, the nation, and the health of our republic. Those wishing to block action should be required to hold the floor of the US Senate to explain themselves to the public.

Our nation deserves better. It is time to amend the filibuster for the health and safety of our democracy.

LWVUS: NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE COMPACT, NOT VOTER CHOICE BALLOT

The 2010 LWVUS National Convention voted to support the [National Popular Vote Compact](#), a plan by which states joining the compact would pledge to throw all of their electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote. The plan would only go into effect when enough states with enough electoral votes subscribe to the compact to insure that the winner of the most popular votes would also receive the most electoral votes and would be elected. In 2018, the LWVUS voted to add advocacy for the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact to its 2018-2020 Campaign for Making Democracy Work, and created a national task force to monitor progress among the states and to provide materials and other resources to League members working to support the Compact.

A more recent idea for electoral college reform, the "[Voter Choice Ballot](#)," proposes that individual states enact laws that could unilaterally award their electoral votes to the national popular vote winner. A ballot question would appear alongside the presidential vote, asking if voters "want the candidate who receives the most votes in the nation to become the president?" For every voter who votes "yes" on the question but votes for anyone other than the national popular vote winner, their vote will be transferred to the candidate who won the national popular vote, for purposes of determining the winner of that state's electoral votes. The LWVUS National Popular Vote Task Force opposes this measure. Simply put, this proposal would not make every vote equal, would not guarantee the presidency to the candidate who wins the most votes in all 50 states and D.C., and would not solve the problem of most states and voters being ignored in the general election. League members working on Electoral College issues should refer to the [National Popular Vote Task Force page at lww.org](#).

LWVUS ENDORSES CREATION OF A COMMISSION ON TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING, AND TRANSFORMATION

As part of its commitment to the fight for racial justice in our democracy, the League has endorsed [H.Con.Res.19](#) and [S.Con.Res.6](#), concurrent resolutions urging the establishment of a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation. In a letter to U.S. Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA) who is co-sponsoring the legislation, LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase stated:

The League of Women Voters of the United States is pleased to endorse H.Con.Res.19, a concurrent resolution urging the establishment of a United States Commission on Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation.

The League of Women Voters has a long-standing commitment to equality for all Americans. We have worked for over 100 years to achieve a just system that protects every American's right to vote. Voting rights and racial justice are inextricably linked,

as the suppression of communities of color is regularly enacted through attacks on voting rights.

At our 54th Convention last summer, delegates resolved that the League of Women Voters help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident: that Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC) deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done. This is imperative to do regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation to ensure that we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

The League is committed to continuing the fight for racial justice in our democracy. We believe that H.Con.Res.19 takes a big step forward in calling for a Commission on Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation. If we can be helpful as this resolution moves through the legislative process, please let us know. We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you to pass this all-important resolution.

Contact Information for Legislators

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren	309 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 202 244-4543
U.S. Senator Edward Markey	255 Dirksen Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 202 224-2742
U.S. Representative Katherine Clark	2448 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 202 225-2836
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MA Senator Cindy Friedman	Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov 617 722-1432
MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo	Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov 617 722-2210

SAVE THE DATE

May 4, 2021	Immigrants' Day (on Zoom)
May 7, 2021	May First Friday (on Zoom)
May 11, 2021	VOTES Act Lobby Day (on Zoom)
June 7, 2021	Lexington League Annual Meeting (on Zoom)
June 26, 2021	LWVUS Annual Council (on Zoom)

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON BOARD MEMBERS 2020-2021

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the June 2021 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to May 24.