



BULLETIN, November, 2020

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

NOVEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, NOVEMBER 6, 2020 SOLAR ENERGY IN LEXINGTON

On Friday, November 6, at 9:30 am, [Lexington Planning Board Member Charles Hornig](#) will host a Zoom panel discussion on solar energy in Lexington. The panel will review an article proposed by the Planning Board to this fall's Special Town Meeting, which would overhaul our current zoning regulations on solar energy and provide residents and landowners guidance on installation of various types of systems. The panel will include:

[Stella Carr, Sustainability Director, Town of Lexington](#): Lexington's first Sustainability Director joined us last spring. Among her initiatives are promoting solar installations for our municipal buildings, and working to make private solar installations more accessible and easier to understand. The goal, advocated by the Sustainable Lexington Committee, is to increase our renewable energy footprint for both residential and municipal uses.

[Amanda Loomis, Planning Director, Town of Lexington](#): Our new Planning Director began her work here in January, 2020. Her prior professional experience includes work on zoning for solar energy use. She has encouraged the Planning Board to bring this issue forward and has helped draft and refine the proposed bylaw.

[Alan Sherman, Temple Emunah](#): Mr. Sherman will share the experience of Temple Emunah in installing a 336kW solar field of canopies above its parking lot. The project, which will be operational this month, is planned to provide shared benefits to the Temple and to low-income families in Greater Boston.

[Dan Voss, Co-Chair, Sustainable Lexington Committee](#): Sustainable Lexington is a Town committee appointed by the Select Board to enhance Lexington's long-term sustainability and resilience in response to environmental resource and energy challenges. Mr. Voss represents the Committee in supporting the proposed by-law and will provide information on solar structures and installations.

This is the second First Friday Forum of the 2020 - 2021 season. All League forums are free and open to the public. Because Cary Memorial Library remains closed, and restrictions on group meetings are still in place, this First Friday Forum will be offered by the Lexington League of Women Voters as a Zoom webinar. For information about the webinar, or assistance on using Zoom, go to <http://www.lwvlexington.org/FirstFriday.html>.

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 promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. For more information contact our League Convener, Margaret Coppe, at mecoppe@gmail.com.

Note to readers:

As members of the League of Women Voters, we are a part of a national and a state organization that are both active in advocacy (on issues) and country-wide activities to support voter access and education. In addition to keeping Lexington League members posted on local League activities, your Bulletin seeks to keep you informed of the positions and activities of the larger organizations. We want to know what statements and initiatives are being made on our behalf, and to tune in to opportunities for participation and action. Look wide!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

Statewide DEI Peer Discussion Group

Join LWV colleagues across the state to learn more about what local Leagues can do to further Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. We will meet online several times a year to share ideas, experiences, and resources. The group will be coordinated by Patty Shepard (Winchester) and Amy Cooper (Central Berkshire County), both of whom are members of the LWVMA DEI Committee. The first meeting was held in late August and our next meeting will be held on **Saturday, November 14, at 1:30 pm on Zoom**. If you would like to participate please email [shepard.patty@gmail](mailto:shepard.patty@gmail.com) or acooper@bcn.net.



LWVMA 100TH VIRTUAL BIRTHDAY GALA

Save the Date

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 1:00 P.M.
FEATURING DANIELLE ALLEN,
JAMES BRYANT CONANT UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR AT HARVARD
GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.LWVMA.ORG/LWVMA-100TH-BIRTHDAY-GALA/

December Virtual Gala

LWVMA will celebrate its 100th birthday virtually on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 1 pm. We are pleased to welcome Danielle Allen, James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard, who has published widely on citizenship and justice systems across history.

In a birthday salute, each Massachusetts League will be naming for recognition a local member who stood out as exceptional during our first 100 years. Our League will be honoring Lotte E. Scharfman, a Lexington League President who died in 1970 on her 42d birthday. A refugee who escaped with her family from Austria during World War II, she devoted her life to work in support of the democratic process and citizens' participation in government. She is widely credited with coining the phrase, "Democracy is not a spectator sport." The Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Citizen Education Fund established in her memory today continues to support all the educational activities of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters.

Check our website lwvma.org/lwvma-100th-birthday-gala/ for more information. In this project, please email Patty at shepard.patty@gmail.com or Amy at acooper@bcn.net.

LWVMA VOTER SERVICE

GUIDANCE ON ELECTION RESULT ISSUES

LWVUS is working on contingency planning for election threats and post-election issues. LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase sits on the Board of the [National Task Force on Election Crises](#), a cross-partisan group of more than 50 experts dedicated to ensuring a free and fair 2020 general election. Over the last six months, the group has held multiple strategy sessions and created and disseminated multiple resources to help navigate this election cycle, and it stands ready to engage appropriately as situations play out.

Since July, LWVUS has also engaged a group of local, state, and national League leaders to develop possible scenarios and review where the League can best serve our democracy, if any of these potential scenarios should come to pass. We encourage local leaders to reach out to LWVMA at lwvma@lwvma.org if they have an election issue that needs to be sent to the national office.

LWVMA ADVOCACY

A Good Time to Get Involved

The new Massachusetts legislative session will begin in January, so this is a good time to get acquainted with our LWVMA legislative specialists to learn about the process and choose an area in which you would like to make a difference. (See related note on the national League legislative priorities on page 6.) The LWVMA is looking for additional volunteers in the areas of Education Financing, Criminal Justice Reform and Transportation. For more information, contact LAC Chair Kathy Leonardson at kathlen@comcast.net.

Racial Justice/Police Reform

A Conference Committee is considering the Senate (S.2820) and House (H.4860) versions of An Act relative to justice, equity and accountability in law enforcement in the Commonwealth. The proposed legislation deals with police procedures, training, and certification, and would establish two separate review commissions, one with regard to the treatment of African Americans, and a similar one with regard to Latinx residents of the Commonwealth. Police unions oppose many provisions of the bills. The LWVMA has urged release of a final bill, and stated in a letter to Speaker of the House DeLeo:

“[W]e are making our voice heard to ensure the passage of police reform and accountability legislation in Massachusetts. Our 48 local MA leagues and 3,050 members stand as allies and in partnership with the 100+ grassroots advocacy organizations in this fight for justice. When the final bill is released, our members will be contacting their legislators to vote affirmatively for Black lives.”

Please urge your legislators to request that the Conference Committee release this bill, and to support it once released.

Status of Other League-Supported Bills

Two other bills supported by the LWVMA remain in conference committees:

[S.2500/H.4933](#)—An Act setting next-generation climate policy

[H.1949/S.1334](#)—An Act to reduce racial inequities in maternal health

ACT TO SUSTAIN ROE V. WADE

With the ascension of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court, there is an increasing chance that the case of Roe v. Wade, upholding a federal right of a woman to determine whether to have an abortion, could be overturned or curtailed. Individual states can act to protect this right for their residents through state legislation.

The ROE Act (S.1209/H.3320), pending in the Massachusetts legislature, would allow a minor to obtain an abortion without parental or judicial consent, and would permit an abortion after 24 weeks if a fatal fetal abnormality is diagnosed. In June, 2019, the LWVMA offered the following testimony to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary in support of this bill

:

*"For almost 50 years, the League of Women Voters has advocated for the right of individuals to make informed reproductive choices based upon their own convictions and beliefs. We recognize the fundamentally private nature of a decision to continue or terminate a pregnancy and believe that pregnant persons should not face obstacles when making these time-sensitive, complex and personal choices. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports H. 3320 and S. 1209 because we believe that this legislation honors an individual's self-determination with respect to reproductive healthcare. Access to reproductive healthcare, including abortions, is an issue of economic justice. * * * * With equitable access to abortion, pregnant people can have more control over decisions related to their careers and education and make reasonable decisions regarding caring for their families. For people facing devastating pregnancy-related medical news, reasonable access to abortion enables the best decision for both pregnant person and family, consistent with their beliefs and values. Since the Supreme Court of the United States recognized a pregnant person's fundamental right to decide whether to terminate or continue a pregnancy,² states, including the Commonwealth, have attempted to constrain this right with consent rules, waiting periods and other requirements that can delay an abortion, increasing the risks associated with the procedure³ and taking the ultimate decision regarding abortion away from pregnant people and medical providers. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports H. 3320 and S. 1209 because this legislation places the private relationship between the pregnant person and medical professional at the center of the abortion decision. * * * * The legislation eliminates unwarranted criminal penalties for doctors providing abortions and modernizes statutory language regarding abortions. It also establishes safety net coverage for abortion for people excluded from MassHealth. Such coverage already exists for all other pregnancy-related care. * * * * LWVMA * * * *urges you to report H. 3320 and S. 1209 favorably."*

Contact your legislators, Senators Michael Barrett and Cindy Friedman, and Representative Michelle Ciccolo, to ask them to support the ROE Act. For contact information go to www.malegislature.gov and click on the Legislators tab.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

UPCOMING POLICY WEBINARS

* [Wednesday, November 11, 2020: CENSUS 2020 UPDATE](#)

As the 2020 Census wraps up, the LWVUS will be making a report on final Census updates. Log in for the November webinar to hear about the count this year, and how we need to organize for future redistricting. Register at: register.gotowebinar.com/register/1456811533946361103

* [Wednesday, December 9, 2020: PREP FOR 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS](#)

This webinar is a training session on how to prepare for next year's state legislative sessions to give the state League maximum impact on issues on our priorities list.

* [Wednesday, January 13, 2020: TESTIFYING BEFORE YOUR LEGISLATURE](#)

This training session will focus on how to draft and present effective testimony in support of legislation advocated by the League.

LWVUS ADVOCACY

2021 Legislative Priorities Guidance

The national League of Women Voters has published its Legislative Priorities for 2021, to help state and local Leagues plan their advocacy in state and local legislatures. Drawn in part from input received from League members across the country, they focus on the ongoing LWVUS *Campaign for Making Democracy Work* and *People Powered Fair Maps*.

Redistricting and Apportionment to promote model redistricting criteria

- Advocate for fair map drawing criteria, including maps that comply with the 1965 Voting Rights Act, districts drawn based on the population living there, and protections for language and racial minorities.
- Strengthen protections for communities of color by determining or assessing core values, needs, or desires of the relevant communities for inclusion in map drawing process.
- Promote strong transparency requirements such as public access to hearing dates and times in advance, public settings for hearings, and viewer accessibility across multiple platforms, including virtual and in-person options.

- Defend existing systems and protect independent redistricting processes currently in place and recent reforms that passed with voter support in recent and past elections.
- Protect state constitutions with provisions that promote free and fair elections to ensure an avenue to protect maps through state courts. Leagues with these provisions should monitor activity around these provisions and move to oppose challenges that would roll back this language.
- Protect apportionment criteria to ensure that districts are drawn based on total population, not citizens or voters
- Support extension of redistricting timelines to ensure ample time to draw maps based on adjusted delivery timelines.

Campaign and Election Administration Reforms

- Embrace voter registration reforms, including making it easier for voters to register and maintain their voter registration.
- Strengthen online voter registration to make it accessible to all, allowing voters to check their registration and update their information through a secure online portal.
- Expand online absentee ballot tracking to allow voters to track the status of their absentee ballots online after ballots are mailed.
- Promote election day registration (same day registration), allowing voters to register or update their information on Election Day and cast a regular ballot.
- Implement automatic voter registration at state assistance agencies, including the DMV, unless they opt out. include safeguards that address the accidental registration of non-citizens and clerical errors.
- Protect early voting and absentee voting by, for example, expanding: early voting hours, especially weekend hours before Election Day, allowing all voters to request an absentee ballot without excuse, and mailing all active voters their ballot.
- Weaken voter ID requirements by removing notary and witness signature requirements, and requirements that voters show photo ID when voting.
- Reject proof-of-citizenship requirements in voter registration.
- Reform voter list maintenance/voter purges in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) to avoid wrongful disenfranchisement.
- Enhance voting security and upgrade equipment to be secure and accessible, providing an accurate, recountable, and transparent count.
- Support emergency preparedness for elections and contingency plans if elections cannot be held in person or if doing so poses a serious safety risk for voters.

Money in Politics

- Institute public financing systems that put value on small donors, not big donors or secret money.
- Require disclosure of who is trying to influence the vote, including transparency with regards to funding of political campaigns, advertisements and expenditures.

Other Urgent Issues

Climate Change

- Strengthen protections for impacted communities who have suffered current and historic environmental injustice, including indigenous people, communities of color, de-industrialized communities, migrant communities, and depopulated rural communities.
- Curtail air, water, and land pollution with measures such as carbon pricing, climate smart agricultural practices, and green transportation, and oppose construction of new oil pipelines without the express consent of impacted communities.

- Expand renewable energy by supporting public investment that builds on renewable portfolio standards to move the country towards majority renewable energy production.
- Secure climate and community resiliency by supporting community ownership of, and access to, new renewable energy jobs and infrastructure; invest in local governments to identify and mitigate climate-related risks.

Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)

- Support ratification at the state level and push for final ratification in states where ratification has not occurred.
- Support inclusion of state ERAs in state constitutions by working with state legislators.

Justice Reform

- Strengthen accountability for the criminal justice system by supporting establishment of local citizen review boards and other modes of public accountability for police and the courts.
- Enact comprehensive policing reform, addressing use of force standards, racial profiling, and proactive policing, and halt the use of predictive analysis tools in sentencing. Establish robust data collection on police-community encounters, use of force, and other law enforcement activities, disaggregated by demographics and support data sharing through a national police misconduct registry.
- Demilitarize the police by supporting legislation that prevents accessing funds to purchase military equipment, using military-grade weapons, conducting no knock raids, and using neck and chokeholds.

National Popular Vote (NPV)

- Establish popular election by supporting a compact among the states governing how they would cast their votes in the Electoral College; for example, the National Popular Vote Compact is one acceptable way to achieve direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished.
- Support the replacement of winner take all laws by state legislatures.

Reproductive Choice

- Protect an individual's right to make their own reproductive choices, including the right to accessible birth control and healthcare.

SAVE THE DATE

November 3, 2020 National Election

November 11, 2020 LWVUS Webinar: Census Update

December 9, 2020 LWVUS Webinar: Prep for 2021 Legislative Sessions

December 13, 2020 LWVMA 100th Birthday Gala 1:00 pm Zoom

January 13, 2021 LWVUS Webinar: Testifying Before the Legislature

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the December 2020 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to November 27.

