



BULLETIN, September, 2020

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Lexington League First Friday Forums will resume in October, 2020.

In November, 2020, voters across the country will vote to elect the President and Vice President of the United States, all of the House of Representatives, one-third of the Senate, and many local offices. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in new voting regulations across the country. Here in Massachusetts the Governor has signed into law reforms passed by the state legislature to facilitate safe voting. These are being tested widely for the first time in the State Primary just held on September 1

On Friday, October 02, 2020, LWV Lexington's First Friday will present a Voting 2020 Update, featuring Lexington Town Clerk Nathalie Rice. She will provide up-to-date information about voting in Lexington including (1) voting by mail; (2) early voting, from October 17-30; and (3) in-person voting. The program will discuss what we learn from the September 1, 2020, primary voting experience.

PROGRAMS CELEBRATING LOCAL WOMEN

September 26 – Louisa May Alcott, Harriett Lothrop, Margaret Lothrop - Concord, MA (*Partners: Minute Man National Historical Park (National Park Service), Friends of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery*)

Presented monthly by [Freedom's Way National Heritage Association](#). To register to attend, go to [FreedomWay.org/Programs/Connecting-Communities-Walks-Talks](https://freedomsway.org/Programs/Connecting-Communities-Walks-Talks).

LEXINGTON LEAGUE NON- PARTISANSHIP POLICY

Reminder: Our July Bulletin included a copy of the Lexington League Non-Partisan Policy which limits partisan activities on the part of some League officers. The Lexington Board will be reviewing the policy at its September meeting and would welcome your comments. Please email your thoughts to wendy_manz@yahoo.com.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

Join us for two racial justice events next week:

Pew Research indicates that two thirds of Americans favor ending qualified immunity. What is qualified immunity? Why should it be eliminated? Why is it causing such an uproar in the MA police reform bill? Join Oami Amarasingham, Deputy Legislative Director of ACLU MA, on Tuesday, September 8th at 7:00 pm when she briefs us on this issue and takes our questions. Register [here](#).



**QUALIFIED
IMMUNITY 101**
OAMI AMARASINGHAM
7 PM | 8 SEP | ZOOM



What are the next steps for the MA Black and Latino Legislative Caucus? Join us on Thursday, September 10th at 11:00 am when we meet with Rep. Carlos Gonzalez of Springfield, Chair of the Caucus and member of the conference committee on police reform legislation. He will discuss the history of the bill and subsequent Ten Point Plans. Register [here](#).



**MA BLACK
AND LATINO
LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS
UPDATE**
REP. CARLOS GONZALEZ
11 AM | 10 SEP | ZOOM



LWVMA ADVOCACY

>Ballot Questions

Two ballot questions will be on the statewide ballot November 3.

Question 1: An Initiative Law to Enhance, Update and Protect the 2013 Motor Vehicle Right to Repair Law. (Right to Repair Law).

Question 1 would require manufacturers that sell motor vehicles equipped with telematic systems to install a standardized open data platform beginning with model year 2022. Vehicle owners could then access telematic system data through a mobile device application and then give consent for independent repair facilities to access that data and send commands to the system for repair, maintenance, and diagnostic testing. Currently, the 2013 "right to repair law" exempts telematic systems from wireless accessibility by vehicle owners and independent repair facilities.

LWVMA takes no stand on Ballot Question #1.

Question 2: Initiative petition for a Law to Implement Ranked-Choice Voting in Elections (Ranked-Choice Voting Initiative)

Question 2 would enact ranked-choice voting (RCV) for primary and general elections for state executive officials, state legislators, federal congressional representatives, and certain county offices.

RCV is a voting method in which voters rank candidates according to their first, second and third preferences. The candidate who receives a majority of first preference votes is declared the winner. If no candidate receives a majority in the first round of voting, the candidate with the fewest first preferences is eliminated and those who voted for him as first preference have their first preference votes reassigned to their second choice. If this reassignment does not result in a majority winner, the remaining candidate with the fewest first preference votes is eliminated and her first preference votes are reassigned to the voter's second choice. This process continues until a candidate receives a majority of first preference votes.

While the process is a bit more complex than simply going with a plurality winner, as now happens, it is not more difficult for voters. Each voter simply ranks her first three choices in order on the ballot. The calculation process thereafter should be conducted in an open and transparent way. Allowing ranked choice voting causes a genuine majority winner to emerge, rather than allowing one candidate among several to be elected with a slim plurality, when some voters, though denied their first choice, would rather elect their second choice than the initial plurality winner.

In 2005, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts did a study of voting systems. The consensus of League members in the state was that: *"Voting systems should be easy to use, administer and understand, encourage high voter turnout, encourage real discussion on issues, promote minority representation, and encourage candidates to run."* The League also concluded that *a voting system "should require the winner to obtain a majority of the votes."* To achieve that majority outcome rather

than a candidate winning by a plurality of votes cast, the Massachusetts League supported instant runoff voting, now better known as ranked choice voting. We concluded a ranked choice system is preferable to a two-round runoff system in terms of cost and voter participation.

LWVMA supports ranked choice (instant runoff) voting and urges a YES vote Ballot Question #2..

For more information: The questions, summaries, what your vote will do, statements of fiscal consequences, arguments in favor and against, and the full text of the measures are in the official guide to the 2020 ballot questions, the Secretary of State's "Information for Voters" red booklet, which will be distributed to the households of all registered voters in September. It will also be posted on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website. : <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/>.

[Want to Work on Ranked Choice Voting?](#)

Because the State League supports Ranked Choice Voting, League members can advocate for passage of Ballot Question #2. The YES ON 2 ballot question campaign for ranked choice voting is seeking volunteers. If you would like to help go to <https://voterchoice2020.org/volunteer/> and fill out a volunteer form for anything from yard signs to letters to the editor. If you can spend 10+ hours per week on passing this historic electoral reform, please select "join volunteer leadership team" on the form. More voters will be receiving their ballots earlier than ever before and now is the time to focus on persuading them to vote YES ON 2. A member of the organizing team will be in touch and get you started if you volunteer as a team leader.

>Racial Justice

LWVUS President, Dr. Deborah Turner, in an Aug. 27 League Update to members states,

"The League stands with Jacob Blake and we stand with Kenosha, Wisconsin. We strongly oppose the systemic racism that allows violence like this to occur repeatedly. The League remains an ally to those leading the work for social justice, and we encourage all Leagues to advocate for Black lives and nonviolent protest".

In August, LWVMA signed on in support of [BeaconBLOC](#) , a "coalition of Black legislative staffers on Beacon Hill calling on House and Senate leadership to fulfill their promise to address racism in Massachusetts, starting with the State House."

Different versions of a policing bill passed the Massachusetts Senate and House ([H.4860/S.2800](#), *An Act relative to justice, equity and accountability in law enforcement in the Commonwealth*) and have gone to conference committee, with the work of the conference committee continuing in closed session. Police unions oppose many provisions of the bills. Conference committee will issue a final bill after Labor Day. Please contact our representative Michelle Ciccolo to thank her for voting YES on H.4860.

>Police Reform

"An Act relative to justice, equity and accountability in law enforcement in the Commonwealth" ([H.4860/S.2800](#)) is currently in conference between the House and the Senate.

The League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. The League also calls for prompt actions by all members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism. In accordance with this position, the LWVMA supports the following positions with regard to the pending legislation:

- 1) Qualified Immunity: Senate version
- 2) Use of force: House version: regarding a) duty to intervene and b on no-knock warrants
- 3) Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) system: a) Decertification due to police misconduct should be based upon "preponderance of evidence" (Senate), not "clear and convincing" (House); b) Investigatory standards should be removed altogether; c) Certification of all current police should not be retroactive as they could have misconduct records which would be waived.
- 4) Expungement: Senate version
- 5) Strengthening the state's Civil Rights Act related to police actions of misconduct.

Contact the Conference Committee Members below to urge that the reconciliation be completed promptly in accord with the League's positions.

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (Boston, only Senator in the Black and Latino caucus)
Senator William Brownsberger (Belmont, Senate President Pro Tempore)
Senator Bruce Tarr (Gloucester, Senate Minority Leader)
Representative Clair Cronin (Easton, House Judiciary Chair)
Representative Carlos González (Springfield, Chair, Black and Latino Caucus)
Representative Timothy Whelan (Brewster)

<p>How to Contact Your Legislator: You can find phone numbers, email addresses and office addresses on the legislature's webpage for all Senators and Representatives. Go to www.maleislature.gov and click on the Legislators tab.</p>

>Housing Bills

Economic bills [H.4887](#) and [S.2842](#), which contain critical provisions for expansion of low-income subsidized housing as well as zoning changes that are intended to encourage more housing for the "missing middle" range of home buyers, are currently in conference between the House and the Senate. Contact Representative Michelle Ciccolo and Senators Mike Barrett and Cindy Friedman to register your support of these provisions. Below are excerpts from the LWVMA's August 17 letter to the Conference Committee:

The LWVMA ... requests that, as you reconcile these two bills, you keep in mind the crisis in housing that has faced the Commonwealth for many years.

The League believes that government policies should work "to provide a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family." ... [W]e have had thousands of families who have been homeless in every recent year, in addition to most lower-income persons and families struggling to find homes they can afford. These bills provide the best option we have to rectify this situation.

We ask that you make it easier for all communities to add to their stock of subsidized affordable housing because experience shows the forces that work to keep such housing out usually succeed, even when majorities are in favor. Affordable housing belongs in every community, not just in the larger cities.

Bonding and appropriations designated for affordable housing are also critical to making more units available. We also recognize that more housing needs to be produced to meet the needs of the majority of the population who have income from their work or retirement and should not need to be subsidized. Priced out of the market are many young families who need "starter homes," workers earning low wages, professionals still paying off college loans, and elders who want to downsize. ...

The lack of housing production has been strangling the economy, and the corona virus pandemic will make modest-priced housing even more critical to our recovery. We look forward to the strongest possible Economic Development bill.

>[Work on the U.S. Census](#)

President Trump has decreed that the U.S. Census Count will end at the end of September rather than October as originally set. There are still residents in hard to count/historically disenfranchised communities that the League and other census supporters are trying to reach to encourage them to participate in the census and to vote if they are eligible this fall. Phone banks are conducted on Tuesday, 11 am to 1 pm, Wednesday, 5 to 7 pm, and Thursday, 5 to 7 pm

You can sign up to volunteer at <https://actionnetwork.org/campaigns/safe-elections-for-all>. You'll need a computer and a phone; training and a script are provided. Please note you need to sign up for each day you would like to phone bank.

>[Legislation Progress Update on League-Supported Bills](#)

Actions taken in July and August on bills the League supports:

Signed by the Governor:

[H.591/S.267](#)—An Act regarding breakfast after the bell

[S.834](#)—An Act relative to female genital mutilation

Bills passing one chamber:

[H.1853/S.1235](#)—An Act relative to step therapy and patient safety, passed Senate

[H.751/S.490](#)—An Act promoting awareness of sewage pollution in public waters, passed House

[H.1948/S.1332](#)—An Act relative to out-of-hospital birth access and safety, passed Senate

Bills 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

[H.4860/S.2800](#)—An Act relative to justice, equity and accountability in law enforcement in the Commonwealth

LWVMA VOTER SERVICE

Voter Questions Answered. Do you have questions about voting under the new election law or anything else elections-related? LWVMA has created a voter email "hotline" to answer any questions you may have about voting options this fall. Please send questions to votehelp2020@lwmma.org and you will receive an answer promptly!

Help on the Web. Share these 5 helpful website addresses for voting information provided by the MA Secretary of the Commonwealth. Check them regularly for polling places and drop box locations since this information can change based on local election officials' decisions:

- www.MailMyBallotMA.com
- www.MassEarlyVote.com
- www.WhereDoIVoteMA.com
- www.RegisterToVoteMA.com
- www.TrackMyBallotMA.com



VOTE411.org is live. The QR code above will take you directly to the site for information on candidates and races.

Watch for Public Service announcements on TV and radio. LWVUS has partnered with the National Association of Broadcasters to launch a voter education campaign featuring public service announcements (PSAs) about voting and VOTE411 on TV and radio stations nationwide that began airing in August

Report Election Glitches. The Election Modernization Coalition that LWVMA is part of will be preparing a report on how the fall elections went. If you have confirmed knowledge of any significant glitches with either the primary or general elections in your town, please send the information to nancy.brumback@gmail.com to share it with the coalition.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWWUS EVENTS

National Voter Registration Day, September 22, 2020

Voter registration is more important than ever this year, and the LWWUS will once again be a premiere partner for National Voter Registration Day, September 22, 2020. A big voter registration push relatively early in the cycle is crucial to ensuring that all Americans have an opportunity to take advantage of expanded options to vote in a safe way, including voting by mail and early voting. Voter registration as early as possible is critical to helping election officials across the country in their efforts to offer these options to all eligible voters.

LWWUS ADVOCACY

>Racial Justice

The LWWUS has signed a letter with more than 400 civil rights organizations calling on Congress to implement needed policing reforms. The letter urges congressional leadership to swiftly rectify the legacy of white supremacy and anti-black racism that has led to police violence against Black people across our country: "Congress must rectify these structural wrongs through legislation before another Black life is needlessly lost."

"Now is the time for Congress to pass meaningful police reform legislation. While we appreciate hearings and resolutions, we need comprehensive measures enacted. We need Congress to advance meaningful legislation to protect Black communities from the systemic perils of over policing, police brutality, misconduct, and harassment, and end the impunity with which officers operate in taking the lives of Black people."

Statement from Virginia Kase, LWWUS CEO, 6/3/2020:

"As a democracy and voting rights organization, we must be part of the progress that is catalyzed at this moment. In the coming weeks and months, we will be supporting our partners in the civil rights community who are working on legislation and policy reforms focused on creating systemic change in our government institutions, starting with unjust policing." Additionally she stated, "Now, more than ever, it's clear that our work to inform voters and hold government accountable on the local and state level is where real potential for change lies."

>Support of the U.S. Postal Service and Vote By Mail

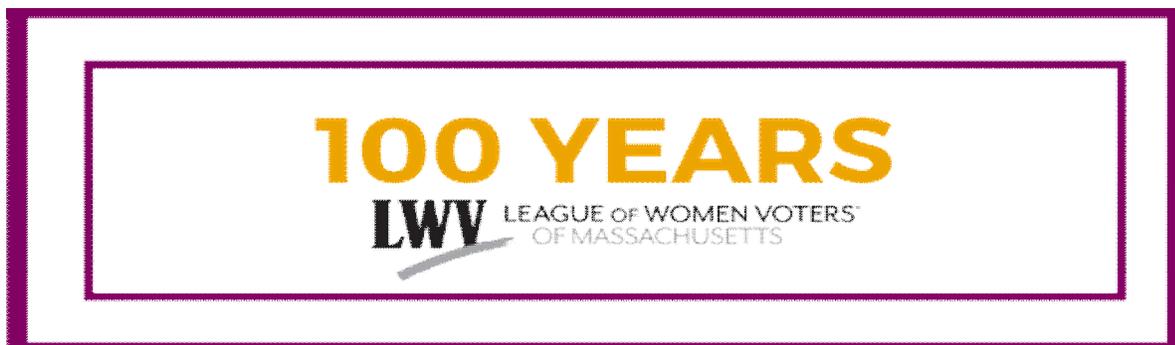
The national League has weighed in to support the U.S. Postal Service and the need for funding to enable it to handle the expected large volume of mailed ballots in

November. The LWVUS joined two other groups suing the Post Office and Postmaster General. The lawsuit asserts defendants intentionally made changes that would undermine the upcoming election. Read the complaint at <https://lawyerscommittee.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/USPS-093111229374.pdf>

On August 22, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill in a bipartisan vote to allocate \$25 billion in funding for the Postal Service and to block operational changes in the Service until after the election. The bill, or a version of it, must pass the Senate. Contact Senators Elizabeth Warren (www.warren.senate.gov/contact) and Edward Markey (www.markey.senate.gov/contact) to register your support of this bill.

LWVUS offers comprehensive talking points in defense of the USPS and in support of mail in voting at: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/talking-points-templates/talking-points-postal-service-usps-funding-2020> and <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/talking-points-templates/talking-points-protecting-and-expanding-person-voting>.

[Editor's note: Apologies for the lengthy links that require copying into your browser. We do not currently have the capacity to incorporate live links from other sources into the Bulletin. We're working on it.]



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2019--2020

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the October 2020 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to September 25.

