



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

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Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

### ***LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION***

#### **LWVL DECEMBER FIRST FRIDAY FORUM Will Massachusetts Be The First State To Have A Carbon Tax? December 6, 2013**

On Friday, December 6, the Lexington League of Women Voters First Friday program will present a discussion on the topic of a Carbon Tax. What is a carbon tax? Is it an effective tool to reduce carbon emissions? What are the prospects for adoption in Massachusetts?

Lexington's State Senator Mike Barrett will be joined by Gilbert Metcalf, Professor of Economics, Tufts University and Christopher Knittel, Professor of Energy Economics, Sloan School of Management, MIT for a discussion of the pros and cons of policies to price carbon. Senator Barrett is co-author of a bill to create a carbon tax which is now working its way through the state legislature.

This is the third in the series of 2013-2014 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 a.m. in the Community Meeting Room on the lower level of Cary Memorial Library, 1874 Massachusetts Avenue. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at [781-863-1733](tel:781-863-1733). All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

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## **DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!**

### **SPECIAL STATE ELECTION 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District Tuesday, December 10, 2013**

The Special State election for voters in the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District is Tuesday, December 10, 2013. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. For more information contact the Lexington Town Clerk's office at 781-862-0500, visit the town's website at [www.lexingtonma.gov](http://www.lexingtonma.gov) or go to <http://www.vote411.org>.

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## **RIDE TO THE POLLS**

For a free ride or to volunteer to drive voters to the polls for the Special State Election on December 10, 2013, call the League of Women Voters of Lexington at 781-862-6498.

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## **The League's F/Y 14 Membership Drive is On!**

If you haven't renewed your League membership for F/Y 14, please remember to do so. The League thanks those members who have already renewed their memberships.

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## **The League is Looking for Volunteers**

The League of Women Voters of Lexington is looking for volunteers to fill board and off-board positions for the coming year. Contact the League at 781-307-3116 for more information.

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## **The League of Women Voters of Lexington is on Facebook!**

"Like" us at <https://www.facebook.com/LWVLexington>

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## **Watch the League's Forums on Demand**

If there is a League of Women Voters of Lexington's First Friday Forum that you've missed or would like to see again, log onto <http://www.lexmedia.org/ondemand.html> and scroll down to "League of Women Voters" under Categories.

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## LWMA Legislation Update



The state legislature recesses at the end of this week until after the first of the year, but committees continue to meet and your Legislative Action Committee continues to keep track of significant pieces of legislation.

**Election Reform:** The House may vote on H.3647, the election law reform bill, before the recess. We hope it will be strengthened in such areas as early voting, teen pre-registration and post-election audits. Look for an action alert in the near future on how you can help influence this bill when it reaches the Senate. We will also testify at a hearing Dec. 4 (changed from Nov. 20) opposing Photo ID to Vote bills and supporting Election Day registration bills.

**Gun Safety:** LWVMA participated in the Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence lobby day. The coalition does not expect a bill on gun safety to be reported out of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security until after the first of the year. There will be a major demonstration in Boston on Dec. 14, the anniversary of the Newtown slayings; see below for more information.

**Welfare Reform:** On Nov. 6, the House passed its version of the welfare reform bill, H.3756, companion to S.1806. A conference committee has been appointed that we hope will keep in the bill measures to help some of our poorest citizens. Both the House and Senate bills incorporated measures we have supported for three sessions: increased work-related deductions, an increased valuation for one vehicle per household, exclusion of scholarships from income, making available information on jobs and educational opportunities, and a savings account program to help recipients when state aid ends.

This session we also supported a bill which set up a comprehensive system of assessments and career training or education to address the low skill levels of most adult welfare recipients. This "pathways" system is also in both bills that have gone to conference, along with \$6 million to support it.

Major parts of H.3756 and S.1806 are devoted to anti-fraud measures that arose from two very damaging 2013 reports on the management failings of the Department of Transitional Assistance. LWVMA has not taken stands on these measures, but we certainly understand that vigilance is needed. We are concerned, however, about

measures that deny or delay aid to people whose basic needs are not met. One such measure, in the Senate version, is to require a job search before assistance is given; the House bill allows applicants to receive temporary assistance while completing the job search.

--Clare Gordon, basic human needs specialist

**Casinos:** Massachusetts adopted, after long debate, legislation which allows for three "resort style casinos" and one slot parlor. At least one casino should, in theory, go to a Native American tribe. Massachusetts adopted a very tight process with rigorous standards for license applicants and a requirement for the consent of the host community. To oversee the process, the state set up a gaming commission, which so far has carried out its mandate to oversee the process very carefully.

While the process is nearing the deadline for applications, there are continual surprises. A casino at Suffolk Downs, located mostly in East Boston, was approved by Revere but rejected by East Boston. Looming over Suffolk Downs is the proposal for a casino in Everett which has strong local support. Now, the Mashpee of Aquinnah have announced plans to build a Class 2 facility on tribal land on Martha's Vineyard, and the Mashpee Wampanoag are still hoping for federal approval of the request to take land into trust.

An independent group working to repeal the casino legislation outright has been gathering signatures to get that question on the November 2014 ballot. Louise Haldeman, Casino and Gaming Specialist

**Next Steps for the Updated Bottle Bill:** As we noted in a recent [email](#), LWVMA doubled its pledge by bringing in 20,000 signatures -- an achievement shared by all members, especially the local League coordinators. LWVMA gathered signatures, along with over 100,000 gathered from other sources, are now being certified (or have been certified) in all 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts. To move on to the next step in getting this bill on the November 2014 ballot, 68,911 signatures must be certified. Once that's done, the Legislature will have one more chance to pass the bill prior to November 2014. Nancy Brumback and Lynn Wolbarst, representing LWVMA, will be working with the coalition over the next month to develop a strategy for moving the bill during this last-gasp legislative window. If the Legislature fails to update the bottle bill by May 4, then it's on to the ballot in November. We will keep you posted on the progress!

Massachusetts League members are welcome to participate in a **rally/press event on Tuesday, Dec. 3**, before the coalition presents all the certified signatures to the Secretary of State. We'll gather on the steps of One Ashburton Place, across Bowdoin Street from the State House, at 11 a.m. for a rally to celebrate the strong public support for the updated bottle bill evidenced by the number of people who signed our petitions. After the rally, the coalition leaders will personally deliver the certified signatures to the Secretary of State.

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## LWVUS

'Tis the season for giving thanks and this year we, at the League of Women Voters, have a great deal to be thankful for.

***We're thankful for our thousands of members and supporters across the country who work tirelessly to advocate for free, fair and accessible elections*** by registering voters, holding candidate debates and forums, fighting back against attacks on voting rights at the local, state and federal level and who dedicate their time and activism to reforming money in politics, defending the environment and so much more.

**We couldn't do all we do without you – on behalf of the millions of Americans you helped this year, thank you!**

As 2013 comes to a close and we begin preparing for 2014 and the midterm elections, we're already hard at work gearing up for programs to protect and empower millions of voters in 2014. Next year, we're committed to stepping up our work to register more new voters, hold more candidate forums, provide more ballot information and help all eligible voters participate in our electoral process. We'll also keep pushing for necessary environmental regulations to protect our planet for future generations and working to keep big money out of our elections.

**Thank you for your continued commitment and support for the League's important work.** We look forward to working with you to Make Democracy Work®.

Thanks again for everything you do.

In League,

Elizabeth McNamara, President

P.S. We're getting a jump-start on all that needs to be accomplished in 2014 by joining the #GivingTuesday movement, an annual campaign created to promote a national day of giving to celebrate organizations like the League that make our communities a better place. [Pledge to support the League on #GivingTuesday and we'll send you a reminder email and online donation form on #GivingTuesday – December 3.](#)

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**We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the January 2014 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran Ronchetti* at [Nancor1106@gmail.com](mailto:Nancor1106@gmail.com) by December 23, 2013.**

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**Dates to Save:**

- Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>            The Updated Bottle Bill Rally/Press Event, 11:00 a.m.,  
One Ashburton Place, Boston
- Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>            First Friday Forum – Can We Talk About the Carbon  
Tax?
- Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>           Special State Election, 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District
- Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>           “Boston Remembers Newtown” sponsored by the  
Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence,  
Parkman Bandstand, Boston Common, 1:30 p.m.



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