



BULLETIN
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February 2025

Calendar

<p>Wednesday February 5</p> <p>7 p.m.</p>	<p>Virtual program on the LWVUS Defending Democracy in 2025 initiative. Details on page 8.</p>
<p>Friday February 7</p> <p>5 p.m.</p>	<p>Last day for incumbent Town Meeting Members to file notice of re-election with the Town Clerk’s Office, 730 Mass. Ave.</p>
<p>Sunday February 9</p> <p>2-4 p.m.</p>	<p>LWVA Reparations Study consensus meeting via Zoom teleconference. See page 3 for details.</p>
<p>Monday February 10</p>	<p>Submit questions for Candidates’ Night by sending an email to envision@town.arlington.ma.us, from Feb. 10 to Feb. 28. See page 5 for details.</p>
<p>Tuesday February 11</p> <p>7 p.m.</p>	<p>Virtual program from the LWVMA on Protecting Our Immigrant Communities. Details on page 9.</p>
<p>Wednesday February 12</p> <p>5 p.m.</p>	<p>Last day for obtaining nomination papers for town offices from the Town Clerk’s office.</p>
<p>Friday February 14</p> <p>5 p.m.</p>	<p>Last day for filing nomination papers for town offices with the Town Clerk’s Office.</p>
<p>Wednesday February 19</p> <p>7 p.m.</p>	<p>LWVA Board Meeting via Zoom teleconference. The meeting URL will be sent to attendees; email one of the Co-Presidents if you would like to attend.</p>
<p>Tuesday February 25</p> <p>6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Virtual program from the LWVMA and the Cape Cod Area League on the Massachusetts Maternal Health Law and what it means for the Cape and Commonwealth. Details on page 10.</p>
<p>Wednesday March 19</p> <p>8 p.m.</p>	<p>Save the date: Candidates’ Night for the Town Election, Town Hall Auditorium, 730 Mass. Ave. Town Meeting candidates can meet voters from 7:30 to 8.</p>

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Co-President's Message

Dear League Members,

I hope all of you have been staying healthy and warm during this rather cold winter. The board has been meeting on Zoom. It's been nice to be able to plan our upcoming voter service activities without having to leave the house! Candidates Night and Legislators Brunch are top on our agenda. Both are events that we look forward to hosting each year. Please pay attention to the LWVA bulletins and emails for updates and details.

The LWVA will also host a consensus meeting on reparations, an important topic for discussion given the current public climate. Please consider joining the meeting on Sunday, February 9th at 2 pm via Zoom. You will find the registration link on page 3 of this bulletin.

Friday, February 14th is extra special this year. Not only is it Valentine's Day, but it's also the last day for filing nomination papers to run for town office. I scanned the town website just before writing this. All but one person who has filed so far is a candidate for re-election. There are no contested races at the town or TMM level. Let's hope that both our outside temperatures and election season heat up soon!

Angela Olszewski

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The BULLETIN is published monthly except during the summer and December by the League of Women Voters of Arlington, PO Box 461, Arlington, MA 02476.

Come to the Consensus Meeting for the LWVMA Reparations Study for Black Americans

The League of Women Voters of Arlington has scheduled its consensus meeting for the LWVMA Reparations Study: it will be **Sunday, February 9**, at 2 p.m., via Zoom. Please register in advance using the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/T0G9doi4Qn-QyMe9MHQ71A>

The consensus questions were printed in the January Bulletin, which you can find at <https://www.lwva.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Jan25.pdf>, starting on page 3. You may find it convenient to print them out before the meeting or consult them online. The background for the study follows.

At the 2023 League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) Convention, the LWV Amherst proposed a study of reparations to determine whether the LWVMA should adopt, by consensus, a position on reparations. Delegates voted by a wide margin to form a study committee. The proposal was set against a background of a number of recent and on-going reparations efforts, including but not limited to:

- The town of Amherst, MA, created a reparation fund, and assigned creating a plan to its African Heritage Reparations Assembly (AHRA).
- Other Massachusetts cities such as Boston and Northampton are considering studies of reparation.
- A bill proposing a commission to study reparations had been filed in the Massachusetts Senate (currently SD2393) as had a bill creating reparations for the descendants of American slavery. (SD2019).
- HR40 has been introduced at every Congressional session since 1989; in April 2021 it was for the first time moved to the House floor for full consideration, but did not receive a vote. It was reintroduced in January 2023.

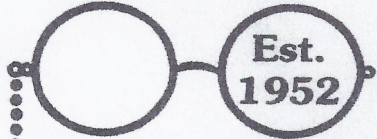
The Study Committee undertook to answer the questions that are proposed in the consensus meetings. It has produced a series of documents for LWVMA members to study. These materials and more can be found at <https://lwvma.org/lwvma-reparations-study/>.

- Study Guide with consensus questions, background, and arguments in favor and against (25 pages)
- Study Report addressing the four questions: Why, Who, What, and How (85 pages)
- Additional resources list including links to readings, talks, and other materials (5 pages)



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

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Come Help with Candidates' Night!

Mark your calendars: Arlington Candidates' Night is **Wednesday, March 19** at 8 p.m., in person in Town Hall. The event will also be broadcast live on ACMi and shown on cable several times before the election. As always, the LWVA and Envision Arlington co-sponsor the event.

There will be question-and-answer sessions with the candidates for town-wide offices: Select Board, School Committee, Board of Assessors, Housing Authority, and Town Moderator. There will also be informal sessions with candidates for Town Meeting before the event, from 7:30 to 8. But it can't happen without you! As we did last year, we are asking people to submit questions for the candidates in advance, to be selected by volunteers from the LWVA and Envision Arlington. See below for details on how to send questions.

We need volunteers for the following positions:

- **Timers:** We need at least four volunteers to keep time during the question-and-answer session, and to hold up time cards to keep all candidates within time limits so everyone gets a fair chance to speak.
- **Greeters:** We need at least two volunteers to greet people arriving at Candidates' Night and provide information about the League.
- **Set-up/Take-down:** Help us to put up precinct signs and get other items organized for the event or take down and pack up when the event is over.

Thank you for your help! Contact Laura Ahner (laura.ahner00@gmail.com, 360-907-2056) to sign up.

Submit Questions for Candidates' Night for Town-Wide Offices

Questions for the candidates running for town-wide office are being solicited from the public beginning Monday, **February 10**. You can submit questions for consideration by sending an email to envision@town.arlington.ma.us. Please indicate to which town-wide office your question relates.

The deadline for submitting questions is Friday, **February 28**. Questions for the candidates will not be accepted at Candidates Night.

We encourage all League members, as concerned citizens of the town, to submit questions for Candidates' Night.



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Membership Renewal Will Change Soon

From the League of Women Voters of the US

LWV is switching to a new member portal for all Leagues across the country. There is no action that members need to take right now, but we want to provide you with an overview of what these changes mean for you.

In 2024, you renewed in the usual way. After the system launches in February 2025, you will receive an email to log in to the portal, but you will not be asked to renew again until a year after your most recent renewal [for the LWVA, probably in March or April]. You will be given the option to sign up to auto-renew annually, and your membership will last a year after your last renewal. Once you have access to the portal, you will be able to update your own information, including contact information.

When it comes time to renew, you will receive an email reminder. Dues will no longer be a fixed rate but will be pay-what-you-can. The recommended dues amount for all members across the country will be \$75, but members can pay any amount (min. \$20), including the current dues rate [for the LWVA, \$60].

Under the current system, LWV of Arlington pays a fixed rate per member to LWV of Massachusetts and to LWVUS. Under the new system, a percentage of dues will go to the state and national League. This means that when you renew, if you would like to make an additional contribution directly to LWV of Arlington as some members choose to do when they renew, this will need to be separate from choosing a higher dues amount. A higher dues amount benefits the League as a whole and allows us to offer the option of lower dues to increase our member base but does not exclusively support the local League.

There will still be the option to renew by check for members who don't use the internet, but members who are able to access the portal and renew that way are encouraged to do so.

Members will be able to contribute by check or cash to the LWV of Arlington only (to Ann FitzGerald, 162 Summer St., Unit 1, Arlington, MA 02474).

On a member level, we hope these changes will make managing your membership easier. On a League level, this is expected to increase membership around the country and increase our ability to empower voters and defend democracy. We will keep you informed as we have new and relevant information.

LWVUS Announces Campaign to Defend Democracy

From the LWVUS

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) stands with the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) to affirm our oath to democracy. Read the official statement issued by Dianna Wynn, LWVUS Board president, at <https://www.lwv.org/blog/our-oath-democracy>.

Women Power Democracy is the LWVUS campaign to defend attacks on democracy in the next 100 days and beyond. Read more about the campaign at <https://www.lwv.org/fighting-voter-suppression/women-defend-democracy>. Sign up to receive campaign updates from the national office at <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/women-defend-democracy>.

What can state and local Leagues do to help? Please join us for Defending Democracy in 2025, a virtual briefing featuring LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart on Wednesday, February 5 at 7:00 PM. Celina will outline the national strategy and take your questions. Register for the virtual program at https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/LW_NKxOGRru-JeDFQYF1_w#/registration.

Let's commit to our mission by attending in large numbers. Read Celina's biography at <https://www.lwv.org/about-us/staff-leadership/celina-stewart>.

**We do solemnly swear that we will empower voters and defend our democracy;
That we will faithfully execute our civic responsibility as nonpartisan advocates;
We do this fearlessly, reflectively, and collectively.
We act from a place of hope and collective power.**

We affirm that we will work to provide democracy education and election administration support, restore and defend voting rights protections, abolish the Electoral College, protect democracy organizations, and fight for reproductive freedoms.

**We will not be deterred from these tasks.
So join us to protect life, liberty, freedom, and justice.**





State League to Host Zoom Talk on Immigration February 11

From the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

What can the League do to protect our immigrant communities?

Please join us on Zoom on February 11 at 7:00 PM, when LWVMA will host Elizabeth Sweet, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). Liz will discuss MIRA's work, offer ideas about how League members can support immigrant protections, and take your questions. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/3yOm0OCxQQKOKOsYm8cmXg#/registration>.

Show that you stand in solidarity with immigrants across our state and learn what we can do to help by attending this important event.

State and Cape Cod Leagues Offer Forum on Maternal Health Law

From the LWVMA

The Leagues of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area (LWVCCA) and Massachusetts (LWVMA) invite you to a virtual forum, “The Massachusetts Maternal Health 'Momnibus' Law: What It means for the Cape and Commonwealth” on Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 6:30 PM to explore the background, emerging initiatives, policies, and services contained in the recently enacted Act promoting midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451220000?pwd=Zm9udG91dD8qGdHyUC1fUW5FI4vLUrCGcYy6#/registration>.

This comprehensive legislation will overhaul maternal health practices in Massachusetts and expand coverage for midwifery, birth centers, doulas and treatment for postpartum depression, among several other initiatives to save lives and to advance racial and economic maternal healthcare justice.

Five speakers — a state senator, physicians, midwifery providers, and a birth doula — will discuss the features and the impact of the new law from their unique perspectives:

- Senator Elizabeth “Liz” Miranda, 2nd Suffolk District, Massachusetts Senate
- Dr. Hafsatou Diop, MD, MPH, MA Dept of Public Health — Assistant Commissioner for Health Equity
- Dr. William Agel, MD, Cape Cod Healthcare — Chief Medical Officer, Obstetrician/Gynecologist
- Erinn Bray, By Your Side Doula — Birth and Postpartum Doula
- Katherine Rushfirth, CNM, FACNM, Boston Neighborhood Health Center — Policy Director and Certified Nurse Midwife
- Jody Schwartz Belson, CNM, Outer Cape Health Services — Program Medical Director for Women's Health Services, Certified Nurse Midwife

LWVMA Welcomes New Executive Director, Honors Previous One

From the LWVMA

LWVMA is pleased to welcome Celia Canavan as its new Executive Director. Celia is a community organizer and policy professional who comes to LWVMA with a demonstrated background in intergovernmental affairs and a commitment to voter engagement and civic education.

Previously serving as the Director of Government Affairs for the City of Brockton, Celia worked in this capacity to streamline processes for applying for federal funding opportunities, engaged municipal offices in civic development, and co-managed the start of the Brockton High School Massachusetts School Building Authority project, the largest physical and financial school building project in the Commonwealth.

Prior to her time at the City of Brockton, Celia worked on multiple ballot campaign initiatives in Maine and in Massachusetts including the 2024 Ballot Question #4 in Massachusetts (Limited Legalization and Regulation of Certain Natural Psychedelic Substances), a Maine ballot initiative to overturn Citizens United and support campaign finance reform, and a grassroots effort to implement Universal Healthcare in Maine. A passionate advocate for social justice, she has previously testified in multiple state legislatures for tribal sovereignty, election protections, and ranked choice voting. Her previous work also includes youth voter turnout and engagement, advocating for public education funding, LGBTQIA+ rights, and racial justice.

A Brockton native, Celia attended the University of Maine at Farmington, where she studied Political Science with a minor in International and Global Studies. A founding member of the LWV Greater Brockton Unit, Celia is dedicated to uplifting the mission of LWVMA, and is excited to work with the LWVMA Board of Directors, staff, and all the local Leagues.

Honoring Pattye Comfort

As Executive Director, Pattye Comfort's tireless efforts to champion democracy and empower voters have supported all our local Leagues in their work, inspired individuals, and strengthened communities across the Commonwealth.

LWVMA is proud to honor Pattye Comfort, whose visionary leadership and unwavering dedication have left an indelible mark on our organization and our mission, by creating a fund in her name.

Pattye is a firm believer in teamwork and intentional partnering with other statewide organizations whose constituencies are different but whose goals and values align with ours. The establishment of this fund in Pattye's honor is a testament to the value of her work at LWVMA and a commitment to continuing that work she so passionately supported. Together, we celebrate her achievements and ensure that her impact endures.

View Pattye's impact reel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAXkkfDOaoc>, and see details on how to contribute at <https://lwwma.org/celebrating-pattye-comfort/>.



Left, new Executive Director Celia Canavan; right, departing Executive Director Pattye Comfort.

From the State League



February 2025

League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
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