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**Subject:** League of Women Voters to Host U.S. Senate Candidate Forums  
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**The League of Women Voters**  
**Massachusetts**



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**September 1, 2009**

**For Immediate Release**  
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## League of Women Voters to Sponsor Candidate Forums for U.S. Senate Special Election

BOSTON- The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts will sponsor a series of candidate forums across the state in the special election to fill the U.S. Senate seat previously held by Sen. Edward Kennedy.

The League encourages all candidates in the special election to participate in the statewide forums.

The dates and locations will be announced later, but the Massachusetts League expects to sponsor at least three forums in different parts of the state and to work with a broadcast partner to televise the forums.

"The League of Women Voters has historically provided a neutral venue for all the candidates in local, state and national elections to be seen and heard by all voters," said Zaxaro Bennett, president.

"The upcoming special Senate election is of critical importance to the citizens of Massachusetts, and the League hopes that all of the candidates for this office will participate in these statewide candidates' nights," she said.

In the special election to fill the Fifth Congressional District seat vacated by Rep. Martin Meehan in 2007, the Leagues of Women Voters in that district's towns worked together to sponsor both primary and general election candidates' nights featuring all of the candidates.

On a national level, the League of Women Voters sponsored debates between the presidential and vice-presidential candidates from 1976 through the 1984 election. After 1984, the national Democratic and Republican parties jointly decided to move sponsorship of those debates to a Commission on Presidential Debates which the parties created.

The League of Women Voters declined to participate any longer in the presidential debates because of the rules and restrictions the Commission placed on the debates and because of control by the major party candidates' campaigns over the process.

Following the presidential debates last fall, many commentators expressed the desire that the non-partisan League again begin sponsoring debates.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. The League encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues. For more information on the state and local Leagues, see the website, [www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org).

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(Note to editors: Zaxaro Bennett's first name is pronounced "zha HAR roh")