



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Daily News Transcript
1091 Washington Street
Norwood, MA 02062

To the Editor:

Kudos to the Daily News Transcript for calling people's attention to the issue of voter confidence in its editorial on June 5, 2007, "*Town Clerks Must be Above Politics.*" The editorial correctly points out that voting fairness and the perception of fairness must not be taken lightly.

Boosting voters' confidence in the management of elections is a key component of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Empowering Voters Project, a comprehensive, nonpartisan plan to ensure that voting is fair, accessible, and easy in this state. In the Empowering Voters Project's first phase, the League drafted legislation, which was signed into law in September 2006, that prohibits those who manage elections from holding a fiduciary role in a campaign other than their own. Starting with the top election officer, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and including town clerks, city clerks, and Election Commissioners, election administrators are now barred from being the chairman or treasurer of a campaign other than their own.

Although the Holliston Town Clerk did not violate this new law, voters lose confidence in the electoral system when someone who is administering the election takes a public role in another's campaign. The nation was witness to two blatant examples of top election officers taking an key role in campaigns in the 2000 election in Florida and in the 2004 election in Ohio. Massachusetts voters will not have to be concerned about those types of problems arising here. We have taken pre-emptive action to prevent that from occurring.

The League is initiating its second phase of the Empowering Voters Project with additional measures to modernize voting procedures in the Commonwealth; such has same day registration, un-conditional absentee voting, easier access to verify your voter registration status, and more.

Voting is the direct way that all citizens participate in our democracy. To encourage voter turnout, we must assure people that their votes count and that elections are run fairly. Since the election in 2000, people know what the League of Women Voters has known since its founding over 87 years ago, voting administration and procedures matter in a fair democracy.

Sincerely,

Diane L. Jeffery
President, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts