



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

133 Portland Street, Boston, MA 02114 · Tel: 617-523-2999 · Fax: 617-248-0881

Email: lwvma@lwvma.org · Website: www.lwvma.org · www.votinginfo.info

Help Protect Affordable Housing in Massachusetts: The LWVMA Opposes Question 2 on the November 2010 Ballot

There will be an initiative petition on the Massachusetts ballot in November 2010 that seeks to repeal Chapter 40B, which is the state law that encourages and regulates the production of affordable housing. Based on long-standing state and national positions, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts will urge people to vote no to defeat Question 2. To help League Leaders become familiar with the issues involved, plan citizen education efforts in their communities, and to advocate for protection of the affordable housing we hope you will read more of what Clare Gordon, LWVMA Housing Specialist, has in summary [HERE](#).

In 1969 the League helped pass the original affordable housing legislation. Many local Leagues have supported plans to broaden the supply of housing in their communities, increasing the number of units that would be available for those who have had difficulty moving into the expensive housing that developers prefer to produce. We need housing for all our citizens, including working families, municipal employees, young people starting out on their own and the elderly on fixed incomes.

A coalition called The Campaign to Protect the Affordable Housing Law has been formed which includes the LWVMA. Some of the relevant facts about Chap. 40B show that:

- Over the last decade, this law has been responsible for approximately 80% of the affordable housing built in Massachusetts outside of the largest cities.
- More than 58,000 homes have been created for working families, seniors, and people with disabilities all across the state because of this law.
- Repealing the affordable housing law would immediately halt the creation of housing that is affordable to seniors and working families in many communities across the Commonwealth.
- A grassroots coalition of more than 200 individuals and organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of residents have come together to protect this law. Our coalition includes: civic, business, religious, and academic leaders as well as senior, environmental, housing, and civil rights groups.
- The affordable housing law codified the goal of ensuring that each community in the Commonwealth does its fair share to meet the housing needs of its residents.

Go to www.protectaffordablehousing.org for more information.

The League and the coalition need your help in the next few weeks. Here are some suggestions as to how you can get involved.

- Flyers and other information will be made available or can be created with the help of online resources. Plan to distribute something at local fall fairs and on Primary Day Sept. 14. (Primary voters are most likely to come again on Nov. 2.)
- Although this is a statewide issue, it may be helpful to know your own community's history of addressing affordable housing issues. For example, has your town or city met the 10% goal for affordable housing?
(See the list of communities at <http://www.mass.gov/Ehed/docs/dhcd/hd/shi/shiinventory.htm>)
What local efforts have been made so far?

- Where do your elected officials and those running for office stand on this issue? There is a list of supporting “Elected and Municipal Officials, Candidates, Local Leaders” on the coalition’s website here: www.protectaffordablehousing.org
- Ask questions at candidate forums and election events. Call and ask your local leaders, state reps and candidates to sign on to the list.
- Provide information for your Bulletin and links on your website.
- Refresh your knowledge of the League’s stands and studies on Affordable Housing (part of the Social Policy/Meeting Basic Human Needs section). The state position was updated in 2008 after an extensive study with regional consensus meetings. See the booklet of background information produced then here: www.lwvma.org/affordablehousingresources.shtml