



THE MASSACHUSETTS VOTER

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

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LWVM Day on the Hill to focus on Election Issues

By Diane Jeffery
LWVM Program & Action Vice President

On Wednesday, March 23, League members will gather from across the Commonwealth at the State House for Day on the Hill. Day on the Hill is the League's annual gathering of members to meet with and hear from elected officials about important public policy issues. Day on the Hill is also our statewide lobby day.

This year's focus will be "Election Issues: Where Do We Go from Here?" In order for the League to work toward ensuring that all citizens have equal access to vote and have their votes count equally, League members need to have a clear understanding of the current election issues in the Commonwealth.

League members will hear from invited guests Governor Mitt Romney

and Speaker of the House Salvatore F. DiMasi. The Secretary of the Commonwealth, William Francis Galvin, will then address the League on election issues in greater detail.

The morning program also offers members the opportunity to strengthen their lobbying skills by listening to League specialists. Our legislative initiatives this year include campaign finance reform, court reform, education reform financing, equal rights in annuity policies, health care and redistricting.

Come at 9 a.m. to Nurses Hall, in the State House, if you would like coffee before the 10 a.m. presentations at Gardner Auditorium. Feel free to bring everyone who is interested in meeting and talking to their legislators. We also encourage League members to invite students, especially high-school government, civics and political science classes. This is a great opportunity for them to hear from the state's top elected officials and to learn more about issues that are important to them, their families and their communities.

Voting Information: Takin' It To The Streets

By Robin Rich
LWVM Assistant Executive Director

In keeping with the League's long tradition of bringing information to voters and citizens, the League's "Vote Mobile" distributed free copies of the League's Voters' Guide special section of The Boston Globe to local community organizations a week before the election. Executive Director Risa Nyman and Assistant Executive Director Robin Rich traveled across Boston, delivering the Guides to the East Boston YMCA, Rosie's Place, the Pine Street Inn, the YWCA-Boston, the Boston Public Library, Action for Boston Community Development, and the Harriet Tubman House.

Each community organization received about 100 copies of the Voters' Guide. The Guide contained information about voting and candidates for office, with candidate biographical information and responses to a question posed by the LWVM. The copies were distributed by the LWVM in the hopes that these community organizations would use

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Robin Rich Delivering Voters Guides to Rosie's Place

Vote! 2004 Campaign and Beyond

By Risa Nyman
LWVM Executive Director

Election 2004 has passed, and the League can take a moment to catch its breath after an unprecedented 18-month campaign to provide Massachusetts voters with comprehensive nonpartisan voting information. This ambitious project, *Vote! 2004 Campaign* emerged from the Board of Directors' commitment to make the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts the premier voter education organization in the state.

The *Vote! 2004 Campaign* started with focus groups of college students to determine how to provide this technologically savvy age group with voting information on the Internet. The result was the creation of a unique website, www.votinginfo.info, which was structured the way young voters wanted – straightforward and clear. The website covered the most basic voting questions, ranging from new ID requirements to step-by-step procedures at the polls in video format.

The website added innovative interactive features like an electronic

reminder service, e-birthday and graduation cards with voting reminders, and a monthly poll question.

The Campaign developed an historic Voters' Bill of Rights which was endorsed by Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin, Governor Mitt Romney, and the state legislature. The Campaign encompassed many voter education projects that the Massachusetts League has been doing for years, such as the *Voters Guide* published as a special 10-page section in *The Boston Globe* and an online voters guide on The DemocracyNet website (www.dnet.org/ma).

The *Vote! 2004 Campaign* developed presentation modules on the presidential selection process and on the Voters' Bill of Rights. Many of these presentations were made to groups who are historically under-represented in the electoral process. These presentations were used to encourage these constituencies to exercise their voting rights on Election Day. (See the list of some of the organizations where presentations were made by League members.)

The formation of a distinguished Advisory Committee for the *Vote! 2004 Campaign* demonstrated that the

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List of Presentations for Vote! 2004 Campaign to other organizations

ABCD - Boston	Moms' Club of Worcester
Asian American Civic Association	Mountview Middle School
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center	National Council of Jewish Women Boston Branch
Boston Professional Women's Group	Newbury College
Cambridge YWCA	Northeastern University African American Institute
Chinese Progressive Association	Pfizer Company
Civic Engagement Committee of the Allston-Brighton CDC	Pine Street Inn
Conference on Rural Poverty and Social Change	Roxbury Community Access Television
Community Action - Haverhill	Smart Women Elect to Make a Difference
Deaf Blind Contact Center	Springwell
Hudson High School	Temple Beth Am
Just A Start House	Toward Independent Living and Learning
LBJ Apartments for Seniors	Winchendon Disabled Veterans Day Center
Mary Ellen McCormack Housing Development	Wyeth Corporation
Masonic Home, Charlton	Youville House
MassPirg	

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Madhu Sridhar
LWVM President

The Health Care Debate Needs You

As health care reform has moved to the top of the Massachusetts political agenda, what's at stake for citizens is an effective and efficient health care system. Something is fundamentally wrong with our current health care system when millions of children are not insured, when working families can't afford health insurance and when the elderly are left destitute without adequate long-term care. Health care is an issue that touches us all in a very personal way.

While the League stresses that universal coverage and cost containment are equally important goals of reform, there are those who place less emphasis on the difficult issue of holding down health care spending. As the League of Women Voters has long recognized, any reform plan that fails to provide access for all Americans to affordable, quality care will only perpetuate what's wrong with the system as it now exists – too little emphasis on preventive care rather than expensive emergency and acute care and too much reliance on those with insurance coverage to pay for those without it.

With a population of six million, Massachusetts has 460,000 uninsured residents, up nearly 7 percent in two years. The uninsured receive medical care but often when it is most expensive – acute care at hospitals after emergencies instead of regular checkups and other preventive care. According to the Institute of Medicine report, the uninsured pay 35 percent of their medical bills. Taxpayers, through subsidies to hospitals and clinics, pay most of the rest. Many of the uninsured are members of working families. But either their employers do not offer health insurance or they can't afford their share of the employers' plans.

A report commissioned by the Massachusetts Legislature found that nearly 40 cents of every dollar spent on health care goes to administrative overhead. Considering \$41.5 billion was spent on health care in Massachusetts in 2002, \$16 billion could have been better-spent providing care to those without health insurance.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has been a long-time strong supporter of the *Massachusetts Health Care Trust* bill. The new *Health Care Trust* bill, a single-payer, universal health care bill, filed on December 1 by lead sponsors Sen. Steven Tolman (Brighton) and Rep. Frank Hynes (Marshfield), details how health care will be financed. It incorporates the results of studies that show that quality health care can be provided to all Massachusetts residents at no greater cost than is now being paid by the federal and state government, businesses and individuals. This is achievable because a single-payer system would greatly reduce administrative costs.

Numerous other health-care bills in the works take an incremental approach and do not attempt to cover all Massachusetts residents. They also involve many payers so would not contain administrative costs; thus they will probably never be able to finance universal coverage.

Our health care system is in dire need of repair – it costs too much, covers too little and excludes too many. It is failing our nation's families and it is failing our nation's economy. Not only is it an important public policy matter, but it also matters greatly to each and every one of us. Fixing the broken health

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Diversity Policy of LWVM

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is committed to reflect in its principles and practices the diversity and pluralism in our state.

In both its principles and practices, the League of Women Voters will promote inclusion in leadership, staffing, membership, and participation in any League activity. There shall be no barrier based on race, ethnicity, national origin, creed, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, attribute, or age.

The League acknowledges that pluralism and diverse perspectives are fundamental to the values the League upholds and are necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

care system will require a broad and sustained commitment from our political leaders, from health care providers and financiers, and from the public. Nobody says it will be easy. It is a complex issue but complexity is no reason for inaction.

The health care debate needs you. Legislators need to hear that the availability of affordable, quality health care is a top priority for their constituents. Contrary to public perceptions, elected officials are extremely concerned about what voters think. Health care reform needs to be more than a slogan. We as citizens must get involved in the process and make reform a reality.

The League Begins a Renewed Effort to Achieve Redistricting Reform

By Cathy Dowd
LWVM Redistricting Specialist

In September, the state Board endorsed the non-binding "Fair Districts for Fair Elections," a Common Cause-sponsored ballot initiative which supported the creation of an independent nonpartisan redistricting commission. On November 2, the initiative passed in all districts where it appeared on the ballot, with an average of 67% of the vote.

On December 1, the League and its Redistricting Coalition partners submitted redistricting reform legislation based on the successful systems currently used in Iowa and Arizona. The legislation would amend the Massachusetts Constitution to establish an independent redistricting commission. The commission selection process is designed to insulate members from the political process and to ensure that they have expertise in redistricting and reflect the diversity of the state. Strict criteria ensure that districts will be of equal population, compact and contiguous, will respect the integrity of towns, and not dilute minority voting rights. Party affiliation or candidate

address may NOT be considered. The legislature will approve the final maps on an up-or-down vote.

Since the 1960s, the League has had the position that redistricting should be done by an appointed bipartisan commission; following the criteria of equal population, contiguity and compactness, and that districts should reflect racial and ethnic populations. By contrast, in Massachusetts today the legislature has total control over redistricting. As a result, our districts are not compact, nor do they reflect racial and ethnic populations; towns have been split up, and districts drawn either to protect incumbents or to punish mavericks. Compared to states with independent redistricting commissions (such as Iowa and Arizona), we have less competition for legislative seats, and our citizens are less well represented.

We need your help in this important initiative. We will be lobbying for the redistricting legislation and may conduct a signature drive. Cathy Dowd, LWVM's Redistricting Specialist, will be forming a committee on this issue. If you are interested, please contact her at: 781-433-8677 or at: cathy.dowd@rcn.com.

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Please mail this form to LWV of Massachusetts, 133 Portland St., Boston, MA 02114 or fax to 617-248-0881. Visit us at www.lwvma.org. Phone us at 617-523-2999.

Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters

LWVM Program in Action:

by Diane Jeffery,
LWVM Program & Action Vice-President

Administration of Justice

Patti Muldoon, Specialist

- The Citizens Coalition for an Independent Judiciary, of which the League is a member, submitted legislation, *An Act Improving the Administration of the Judicial Branch by Implementation of Certain Recommendations of the Monan Committee*, which was sponsored by Rep. Alice Peisch (Wellesley). The legislation seeks to strengthen management of the Massachusetts courts as called for by the Visiting Committee on Management of the Courts chaired by the Reverend J. Donald Monan, SJ, Chancellor of Boston College.

The bill will clarify reporting lines and responsibilities within the court by requiring that the Chief Administrator, now called the Chief Justice for Administration and Management, serve at the pleasure of the Supreme Judicial Court rather than the fixed, five-year term under current law. The legislation would also broaden the potential pool of candidates for Chief Administrator by removing the requirement that the position be filled by a judge.

The League's Citizens Coalition partners are Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, Common Cause Massachusetts, the New England Legal Foundation and Pioneer Institute for Public Policy Research.

Campaign Finance Reform

Mary Anne Kenney, Specialist.

- LWVM continues to work with a coalition of organizations including Common Cause, Mass Voters for Fair Elections and MassVOTE to draft legislation to publicly finance elections. Many members of the Legislature are also working with us. The coalition partners are working toward a consensus on the bill's details, and so have decided to delay filing a bill for a month or two.

The areas to be resolved include the scope of the bill – legislative races only, statewide races only, or both; adjustments to the contribution limit; how to deal with officeholder expenses, and final details of the thresholds candidates must reach before qualifying for matching funds. This new bill will differ from the Clean Elections law that was repealed in 2003; it will incorporate suggestions from past experience and input from the legislature.

Education:

Mary Frantz, Specialist

- The League has again filed legislation to amend the Chapter 70 formula for the distribution of education aid to cities and towns. Since the 1995 publication of the LWVM Fiscal Policy Committee's report, *Financing Schools in Massachusetts: An Analysis of the Education Reform Act and Recommended Changes*, the League has submitted this legislation in each legislative session to implement the "League formula." Again this year Sen. Pamela Resor (Acton) filed the bill in the Senate and Rep. Geoff Hall (Westford) filed in the House.
- Legislators and education advocates alike are awaiting the decision of the Supreme Judicial Court in the *Hancock v. Driscoll* court case. In this case the plaintiffs (19 school districts) argue that the state is not meeting its constitutional obligations as specified by the court in the 1993 McDuffy decision because the foundation bud-

get does not provide adequate resources to educate children to high standards in the seven curriculum frameworks. The Court heard oral arguments in October and a decision is expected early in 2005. The League signed on to an amicus brief supporting the plaintiffs.

Equal Rights

Betsy Dunn, Specialist

- An Act to Provide for Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies* was once again filed. Lead sponsors are Sen. Therese Murray (Plymouth), Rep. Ruth Balser (Newton) and Rep. Ronald Mariano (Quincy). This legislation requires that state-regulated annuity policies sold to residents of Massachusetts must be gender-neutral in all the terms and conditions of the contracts, including premiums and benefits. This bill has passed the Senate twice on a voice vote. Last spring, Rep. Mariano, chair of the Insurance Committee, opposed it. Over the summer Rep. Balser and Rep. Mariano worked out their concerns so that they could co-sponsor it this session.

Health Care

Judy Deutsch, Specialist

- The new *Health Care Trust* bill (a single-payer, universal health care bill) was filed on December 1. Its lead sponsors are Sen. Steve Tolman (Brighton) and Rep. Frank Hynes (Marshfield). Copies are available from Sen. Tolman's office (617-722-1280 or steven.tolman@state.ma.us). The bill includes a section (21) that describes how it will be financed.

It is very important that you ask your state senator and representative to support the Massachusetts Health Care Trust Bill if they have not done so already. If they have done so, please thank them.

- You may be confused by the multiplicity of plans that are being discussed in the media. Please note that the other plans (including the bill introduced by Sen. Moore, which you can get through his office) are incremental and do not attempt to cover all Massachusetts residents. Also note that they involve a multiplicity of payers. This means that their administrative costs will be very high and thus they will probably never be able to finance universal coverage.

Redistricting

Cathy Dowd, Specialist

- The Massachusetts League endorsed the non-binding "Fair Districts for Fair Elections" ballot initiative, which called on state representatives in 15 districts to support the creation of independent nonpartisan redistricting commission. On Nov. 2, the initiative passed in all 15 districts with an average of 67% of the vote.
- Working in coalition with Common Cause, NAACP and other voting rights groups, the League drafted legislation that lays out the details of how the ballot initiative would be implemented, including appointment of commission members, map-drawing criteria and the process for legislative approval. The legislation was filed by Sen. Richard Moore (Uxbridge). The League emailed all state senators and representatives urging them to co-sponsor the legislation, and League members lobbied their legislators.

Book Reviews

Pat Costello

LWVM Diversity Advisory Committee Chair

There is a wealth of material on diversity and multicultural issues that is worth exploring. Following are books that have been reviewed by

Dotty Burstein of the Winchester League for the Winchester Multicultural Network that you might consider for yourself or a book group.

Aged by Culture by Margaret Morganroth Gullette, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

This fascinating book is a strong argument for taking age seriously, but doing so in a way that is different from the obsession with trying to stay young. The author, a resident scholar at Brandeis University, advocates for a culture that resists gerontophobia, or the fear of aging. This fear leads naturally to ageism, an ancient prejudice that is increasingly imposed on the middle aged because of this society's preoccupation with a youth culture. The author argues throughout for a collective societal goal of "feeling at home in the life course at any age." To this writer, "feeling at home" implies feeling that she brings something of value at any stage in her life. If this something of value is recognized by society, then the reason for prejudice against those "of a certain age" declines dramatically, and a more equitable society can emerge.

Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America by Jonathan Rauch, Time Books, Henry Holt and Co., NY, 2004.

In the controversy surrounding gay marriage in this country, Jonathan Rauch offers compelling real-life examples of the benefits that gay marriage provides to the health of marriage as an institution. Interestingly, he argues his case by using some of the same mainstream values that Senator Rick

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Diversity Policy Revised

Pat Costello

LWVM Diversity Advisory Committee Chair

In its annual review of its Diversity Policy, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Board revised its Diversity Policy in October. Like other League policies, the Diversity Policy is a living document, meant to be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

The LWVM Diversity Advisory Committee encourages all League members to read and discuss this policy. Both LWVUS and LWVM strongly recommend that all local Leagues adopt a diversity policy, review it every year and put it into practice.

LWVM Diversity Policy

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The League acknowledges that pluralism and diverse perspectives are fundamental to the values the League upholds and are necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

Adopted by LWVM Board, 10/28/04

The LWVM Diversity Advisory Committee

The Diversity Advisory Committee is open and welcomes new members. If you are interested in joining the committee, please call the League office 617-523-2999 or send an email to pcostello@lwvma.org.

Photo: Alik Driscoll, LWVM Board Dir.



Diane Jeffery, LWVM P&A VP; Harvey Sapolsky, MIT's Director of Security Studies Program; Judith Kurland, Former Regional Director for the US Department of Health and Human Services; John Walgreen, Wheaton College Professor of Public Policy and Economics; and Madhu Sridhar, LWVM President.

Fall Conference 2004 The World 72 Hours Before Election Day

By Michael A. Frishman
LWVM Board Director

Fall Conference 2004, held on October 30, was on a day of mist and damp chill, and in competition with Boston's World Series Championship celebration. But LWVMA President Mahdu Sridhar's welcome warmed up the full house attending "Our Choices, Our Future – Vote! 2004," as she kicked off the celebration of 85 years of providing non-partisan information and education to the voting public.

The year was very busy. Surveys consistently reveal that the more informed the citizenry is, the more likely they are to vote. The League's election information website, www.votinginfo.info, was up and running on schedule, providing up-to-date, comprehensive, and accurate Massachusetts election information. Young voters were a special emphasis this election cycle, and the website was added as a primary election information link at

Spotlight on Local Leagues

Lora Goldenberg
LWVM Bulletin and Minutes Reader

It has been an extremely busy fall for Leagues across Massachusetts. Voter service activities of every variety proliferated.

The **Beverly** League sponsored a contest with their local newspaper. Each week a local voter was photographed and asked their opinion of the importance of the electoral process. Readers were asked to identify the voter and where they were photographed. The "Every Vote Counts Contest" selected two winners each week, awarded them tote bags, printed their names in the newspaper, and entered them in a drawing for a free newspaper subscription. The article describing the contest closed by saying, "Voting is about you, me, us and our vision for our country. These are the reasons we go to the polls."

The **Wilmington** League worked with Nathalie Demers, Teen Services Librarian, on a campaign entitled "Vote! It Does a Nation Good!" A series of events was planned to "motivate Wilmington teens and their families to become informed and active in the democratic process." These events included book discussions on *Vote for Larry*, written by local author Janet Tashjian; participation in the Student-Parent mock election; an essay contest on topics such as "Do you think the voting age should be lowered?"; an art contest designing posters, bumper

many colleges and universities across the state. The League's "Voters' Guide" published in the October 19 *Boston Globe* was comprehensive and the League-produced "Voter Bill of Rights" took up the entire front page (The document, also signed earlier in the year by the Governor and the Secretary of State, was posted at every polling place across the state.)

Keynote Speaker Dolores Mitchell, Executive Director of the Commonwealth's Group Insurance Commission, and also active with the National Women's Political Caucus, addressed an increasingly polarized electorate – with no way, even within hours of election day, to predict the outcome. What we need perhaps, she said, is an election with a clear and decisive outcome – what we have now is an electorate whose interests can be hard to really define and too many voters making their choices on the way to, or even once in the voting booth. As an example she cited polling results that find 68 percent of voters want the rich to pay more taxes and 68 percent wanting to end the "Death Tax."

The panel discussion following the keynote address included speakers on four issues identified as the major concerns of the 2004 campaign: health care, education, security and the economy.

Former Regional Director for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Judith Kurland began with the observation that among the issues of concern, health care ranked fourth in polls overall, but second for Democrats and eighth for Republicans. In 1992, the top issue of concern to voters was access to healthcare – 40 million were uninsured. Today 45 million have no insurance, with another 40 million underinsured. Costs are rising rapidly. Drug costs on average today are 81 percent higher here than abroad; in 2000 that figure was 60 percent. This is largely because the government has been forbidden by Congress to negotiate with the

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stickers, or buttons; voter registration materials at the high school and the library; and an election party on November 2 announcing the results of the mock election. The Middle School Parent Advisory Council, a local bank, and the Friends of the Library underwrote all of the activities.

Many Leagues helped publicize the elections. The **Arlington** League subsidized new town-authorized sandwich signs with voter information. In **Martha's Vineyard** and in **Plymouth**, voting displays were put in the libraries, including the Voters' Bill of Rights. The **Wellesley** and **Westwood-Walpole** Leagues each got permission to hang a VOTE banner over a major roadway in town. The **Williamstown** League solicited funding to place billboards in North Adams, Pittsfield, and Great Barrington with the registration dates and locations.

The **Brookline** League conducted a voter registration campaign on six Saturdays in Coolidge Corner and Washington Square, registering or updating the addresses of 1,000 voters. The **Milton** League went door to door trying to increase voter registration in the precinct with the lowest registration rate.

Leagues focused some of their efforts on the youngest segment of voters. The **Acton Area** League emailed members information on websites that college students could use for assistance in getting absentee ballots. In **Belmont**, League members conducted voter registration in senior social studies classes in the high school. Leagues

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LWVM President Madhu Sridhar, Middlesex County District Attorney Martha Coakley, and LWVM Executive Vice President Lynn Cohen.

The District Attorney of Middlesex County Speaks at Fall Conference Luncheon

By Michael A. Frishman
LWVM Board Director

Music to League of Women Voter ears: "Participation in elections is important and it is important because of what those we elect do," said Middlesex County District Attorney Martha Coakley, first elected to the office she now holds in 1998. "and thus, we need to do more than decide who to vote for on the way into the voting booth."

Much of what we see in the criminal justice system today, she said, relates back to the elections in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, when many legislators ran on "tough on crime" platforms, then wrote and voted for laws that imposed new mandates for long sentences with little consideration for what the incarcerated would do while in prison or how they would be reintegrated into society when released.

Most of Coakley's comments addressed her concern for the way children and women are treated by the system. She would like to see a system of integrated services for children at risk, starting as early as the primary grades in school. Children at risk are often, if not usually, apparent to teachers and other professionals in the schools as early as the second or third grade. However, as a law enforcement official, she has no funds or mandate to establish any intervention programs. The criminal justice system can only get involved after actionable behavior has begun and when the required response, for the most part, is punishment.

An additional barrier to early intervention work with children at risk is society's unwillingness to view mental illness as a medical problem. Too many parents choose to medicate symptoms rather than risk the perceived stigma of obtaining treatment for a mental health problem.

Woman confronting domestic violence are not usually suddenly at risk. While not offering proposals for early and effective intervention, Coakley did offer her concern about the need for assurance, when a woman encountering domestic violence appears in court, she can be certain she will be assisted and not prosecuted herself.

"It is hard," she said, "to measure what we prevent."

Funds are needed for intervention programs and for vocational education. In times of limited budget resources, communities must decide priorities. Which, she asked, for example, is more important: "municipal trash collection or counseling for school children?"

In closing, Coakley expressed a wish for the future: "After the election I don't want to be asked 'What do women want?' I want to be told: 'We can hear you now.'"

The Road to a League Position

By Ernest J. Dieterich
LWV of Winchester

For any League to adopt a position on which to act, four steps are needed: undertaking a study, formulating questions whose answers lead to the position, achieving member agreement, and board approval.

Study

As part of its program for the year or biennium, approved at Convention or Annual Meeting, any League – the League of Women Voters of the United States, a state League, a local League, or an Inter-League Organization – can launch a study. Its topic may be new or may be aimed at revising an existing position.

A study committee prepares the information base for a new League position, including the technical facts of the topic and the political facts that determine what kind of position will be effective; it prepares presentations to inform League members; and it trains resource persons for local Leagues' units and workshops if necessary.

The League is a truly grassroots organization, and it is in the local Leagues that members attend meetings to learn and understand the facts, using study committee materials and other sources, and they discuss this material to reach understanding.

Questions

Consensus questions, whose answers create a basis for a League position, are prepared either by the study committee or as part of the authorization for the study. They should not be narrow in scope nor should the possible answers unduly restrict future actions. The questions must be approved by the board of the League sponsoring the study before they are sent to the local Leagues, where they become the focus for reaching member agreement.

Member Agreement

Member agreement is required as a basis for action. Action that is based on decisions of informed members and that involves its members is what sets the League apart from other organizations. Member agreement may be reached in several ways: by a unit or membership meeting; by a questionnaire as a tear-off in a bulletin, newsletter, or *Voter* or sent as a separate mailing; by a telephone poll; or by electronic communication, as is being tried in the present LWVM Voting Systems Study.

Consensus is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement. It is a process whereby members discuss an issue based on the questions posed as part of the study and come to agreement on how to respond to them.

Concurrence, the other form of member agreement, resembles consensus, but it is the act of agreeing – or concurring – with a statement or position. Groups of League members or League boards can concur with recommendations of a study committee, decision statements formulated by a League board, or positions reached by another League.

Concurrence can also be used to amend or adopt a League position by a two-thirds vote of a Convention or Annual Meeting.

The Consensus Meeting

In the League consensus is not reached by a vote; it is rather the sense of the meeting, emerging

from the give-and-take of group interaction and exchange of views. A bare majority does not constitute consensus, but unanimity is not required. Consensus on a question requires a substantial majority supporting the most-favored answer, but it may not exist if there are significant objections to this answer.

A consensus meeting needs a leader, a resource person, and a recorder; the resource person can also be the leader. Though guests may be present, only League members may participate in the discussion. The meeting's leader should ensure that all members are comfortable expressing their views, even unpopular ones. Discussion should not become argument and no person should dominate.

The recorder creates a report to the board authorizing the study including the number of participants, the members' responses to the questions, the questions on which the members were undecided, and any other information that will help the approving board decide whether consensus was reached.

Approval

The approval of the board that authorized the study is necessary for the adoption of a League position. This board is responsible for assuring that consensus was reached. In order that the League speak with one voice, no local League should publicize its own conclusions on a state or national study. A League position exists immediately upon board approval and can be the basis for action. Every League position must be readopted at every Convention or Annual Meeting.

Sources

In *League*, Chapter 10, on the web with the URL:
<http://interactive.lwv.org/elibrary/pub/IL2002.pdf>

Our Search for Leadership is Your Search

As an organization with sixty Leagues statewide and close to 5000 members, LWVM recognizes that you, our local League Presidents, are our best source for names of members who can provide leadership at the state level. We are especially interested in knowing if you will be available to serve the state League in some capacity. The challenge of effectively managing and growing the League will require all of us, individually and collectively, to put together a team of strong and dynamic leaders with the capacity to translate vision into reality.

As you know, the Nominating Committee is developing a slate of officers and directors to serve on the 2005-2007 LWVM Board of Directors. The Committee is seeking the best possible candidates from around the state with expertise, experience, and integrity, enthusiasm, and a demonstrated commitment to the League. In an attempt to put together a board that is geared for long-term success of the League, we are looking for board members with bold vision, creative ideas, new perspectives, the desire to effect change and the energy to work with others to make it happen. In addition, we are looking for members with expertise in Public Relations, Development, Web-technology, Communications, Program & Action, Membership, Citizen Education, and Finance (treasurer and budget). We are seeking members from all backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and genders.

With your help, the Nominating Committee can put together a slate that will create enthusiasm for the work of the League at both local and state levels. If you are interested in serving on the 2005-2007 LWVM Board of Directors, or would like to recommend some who is, please contact the League office at (617) 523-2999 or lwvma@lwvma.org.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS
CITIZEN EDUCATION / Lotte E. Scharfman Memorial Fund

JUDGES WANTED FOR 6th ANNUAL ONLINE STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

"Making Democracy Work:
Lessons Learned from the Presidential Election"

Just in time to sign up!

Essay deadline is February 28, 2005
All essays and judging done electronically.
Judges will receive guidelines for scoring.

All contest info available at www.lwvma.org

**EMAIL THE STATE LEAGUE AT judges@lwvma.org
TO SAY "SIGN ME UP!"**

(Campaign and Beyond cont. from page 1)

Campaign had broad support from people who are dedicated to the full participation of all citizens in the electoral process. The League is grateful to them for their support.

Throughout the Campaign, the League office fielded thousands of phone calls and e-mail inquiries from citizens about voting. In the week before the election, the phones rang constantly as the staff worked to assist voters with their questions and problems. Many callers expressed thanks and acknowledged the special services that the League provides.

Unfortunately, too many of these callers had problems that would prevent them from voting, for example, absentee ballots that never arrived or arrived too late, confusion about their voter registration status, change of address, and more. As always, it is disheartening to have to tell an eager voter that they would be unable to vote in this election.

The League recognizes that there is still so much to do if we are committed to the integrity of the voting process and to its openness and ease. Although Massachusetts did not encounter the problems that other states did with extraordinarily long lines, faulty machinery and provisional ballot questions, we did have some problems. The League believes that any voting problems are too many. We want to strive for a system that does not put obstacles in voters' paths and one that everyone will trust.

Between now and our next state election in the fall of 2006 the League will step up its work to improve voting procedures here in the Commonwealth. The League will launch a new campaign in 2005 to remove obstacles and barriers to voting. Through education and advocacy, the League will lead the way to insure that all citizens can participate equally in the electoral process.

In the final days before an election, it is the League of Women Voters that is the most trusted organization to come to the aid of the voters. We will continue our work to keep the voters' trust.

(Fall Conference 2004 cont. from page 4)

pharmaceutical companies for better prices.

No proposal to improve delivery of health care currently being considered is as comprehensive as that proposed in 1960 by then President Richard Nixon. The driver for the debate today is what role government should have: should it help and facilitate delivery of health care, or should it "get out of the way" and let the marketplace decide? The problem, Kurland says, is that at the same time there are too many government blocked options: bans on research, no coverage for certain procedures and types of care, no reimbursement for most reproductive medicine. In closing she noted that we need to recall that "malpractice" is bad medicine and not an insurance problem; public health, which is a major component of good health for the disadvantaged, is in serious decline. Senator Kerry has proposed incremental changes that might help the system and President Bush largely supports abandonment. She also noted that we avoid using the word "lies" when we ought to.

Paul Reville, Executive Director of the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, began by noting that Federal Government funds on average represent only eight percent of the local education budget – the level of influence has changed with the implementation of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, but not much.

The questions today about our public school system are much the same as they have always been:

- What is the mission of the public schools and how can we achieve it?
- What is the role of the government?
- How are we going to pay for it?

Today's discussion, in an increasingly complex environment, needs to focus on mission, breadth, how much to provide, and how to assure that we will have managers and teachers up to the challenge. Do we want schools that just replicate what we have been doing until now? Do we want public education that assures that all will have the same opportunities, or do we want to assure equal opportunity for each individual to achieve the maximum level of success? How much choice do we need to foster? What is the role of the greater community? Once we've made these choices, how do we pay for them?

The pool of people who manage our national security and foreign affairs are a small group who work together for long periods of time moving in and out of government as administrations change. This, according to Harvey Sapolsky, Director of MIT's Security Studies Program, is even further the case in the 2004 presidential contest between two men who graduated two years apart from Yale, where both also belonged to a secret society, Skull and Bones, which only inducts 15 new members a year.

We have seen the transition from the Cold War, with two superpowers making strategic moves around the world to protect their separate interests, to a world with a single power with much less need to make major expenditures for their own defense. The difference – and choice – today is determining who (if any) is the enemy and what the actions and strategy will be.

Starting with a quote from Satchel Paige, "Never look back, something might be gaining on you," and the reminder that economics is often called the "dismal science," John Walgreen, Wheaton College Professor of Public Policy and Economics, painted a somewhat bleak picture. He noted that recovery from the short recession of 2001 has been slow; the jobs lost have yet to be recovered, let alone jobs for newcomers to the work force. Manufacturing employment peaked in 1998 and shows no signs of returning to those prior levels, and there is no sign that the hi-tech bubble will return. The Congressional Budget Office projects 2005 unemployment to remain at about 5.2 percent with little change in that rate for the next eight to ten years. We are becoming a society with increasing divisions based on wealth. The only real change in recent years is that defense expenditures have grown from three percent of Gross Domestic Product in 2000 to about 3.9 percent in 2004. He ended by noting that another public tradition also continues with the evoking of a woman long on the political scene: "Rosy Scenario."

(Takin' it to the Streets cont. from page 1)

them to help educate their constituencies about voting and candidates for election. Also, the television station Univision, an all-Spanish station, recorded a short, informative interview in Spanish with Robin to educate their viewers about the importance of voting. This outreach effort was part of the League's ongoing campaign to reach out to minority communities and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

(Spotlight on Local Leagues cont. from page 4)

in **Hamilton-Wenham, Norwood, Newton, and Martha's Vineyard** have worked with local high schools to register students. The **Winchester** League extended its voter registration efforts beyond its own high school to those in Medford and Woburn. The **Wellesley** League registered high school students and Wellesley College students, the **Topsfield-Boxford-Middleton** League registered voters at North Shore Community College, and the **Amherst** League registered voters at the University of Massachusetts. The **Needham** League sent reminders to high school graduates to register and apply for absentee ballots.

The **Arlington** League co-sponsored a debate between the candidates for State Representative that focused on affordable housing. They also are conducting a study on the conduct of elections in Arlington. **Belmont's** League held a candidates' event for the special election for Selectman. The **Hamilton-Wenham** League mentored high school Model UN students in hosting a debate between the candidates for State Representative. The **Topsfield-Boxford-Middleton** League held a "Candidates Meet and Greet" at North Shore Community College.

While all of these activities (and many candidates' nights and action in support of the ballot question to create an independent commission for redistricting) were occurring, Leagues still found time for informational forums on diverse topics. The **Andover-North Andover** League held a forum on affordable housing and another on teen parties featuring the police chief, youth officer, a representative of the District Attorney's office, high school guidance counselor, and member of the Andover Youth Council. The **Bedford** and **Lexington** Leagues each plan updates on the future of Hanscom Field. The **Martha's Vineyard** League hosted the president of the Women's Bar Association speaking about "Where Women Stand Today and How They Will Affect the 2004 Election." Finally, the **Worcester Area** League planned a series of forums, in conjunction with Worcester State and Assumption Colleges, on the city's form of government.

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League of Women Voters in gold on elegant blue enamel, retractable black ink ballpoint pen @ \$4 each (2+ pens @ \$2.50/pkg)

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THANK YOU,

to everyone who participated in Phonthon 2004. We especially want to thank the following people who gave generously to support the work of the League and the Citizen Education Fund.

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THANK YOU! TO THE BUSINESSES THAT SUPPORT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League is very appreciative of the support given each year at Phonthon time by the following businesses who offer the League use of their phones and offices. Our 80+ volunteers couldn't accomplish their task without this support.

Thanks goes to -

- ◆ Coldwell Banker/Hunneman Victor of Andover - Colleen Kiezulas
- ◆ A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc. of Newton - Edward S. Heald, VP
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SPECIAL THANKS TO 2004 PHONTHON PRIZE DONORS

In addition, the League is pleased to offer prizes to outstanding volunteers at each Phonthon session. These delightful prizes are donated by the following businesses. Thanks to -

- ◆ Curves, Newton
- ◆ DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln
- ◆ First Night Boston
- ◆ Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston
- ◆ JFK Library, Boston
- ◆ Ritz Carlton Hotel, Boston
- ◆ Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge
- ◆ New England Aquarium, Boston

(Book Reviews continued from page 3)

Santorum uses in arguing against same-sex marriage: the stability of the family, the benefits of close relationships in care-giving, contributions to the community in which the couple lives.

Jonathan Rauch, vice president of the Independent Gay Forum, is a correspondent for The Atlantic Monthly and a writer in residence at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. He is the author of several books on public policy, culture, and economics.

The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality by Thomas M. Shapiro, Oxford University Press, NY, 2004.

This book "challenges all Americans to reconsider what must be done to end racial inequality." While acknowledging that racial prejudice in America has declined over the last three decades,

author Thomas Shapiro, a professor in the Heller School at Brandeis University, argues that there continues to be racial inequality. In fact, the average African American family has a dime for every white family's dollar. Even among black and white professionals in the same occupation where they earn the same salary there is inequality in housing and in the educational prospects for their children.

Interviews with almost 200 African American and white families provide the "meat" of the book. Through these interviews, Shapiro discovered an enormous "racial wealth gap." This gap perpetuates racial inequality because it is assets—inheritance and family wealth in savings accounts, home equity, and other investments that transmit advantages and opportunities from one generation to the next. Without these assets, there are, naturally, material inequality, residential segregation,

and huge differences in the quality of available education.

To get to equality between the races, Shapiro suggests a strategy called asset policy. Asset policy uses start-up initiatives such as the Children's Savings Accounts, Individual Development Accounts, and Down Payment Accounts to provide families with a chance to work toward "the American Dream." Equal results, which Shapiro calls rewards, come only when a just society sharply reduces inequalities in wealth.

League Calendar, 2005

Day on the Hill	March 23
Making Democracy Work Event	April 10
Convention	May 13-14

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Citizen Education Fund
announces the

6th Annual Online STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

for Massachusetts grades 4-12

*Making Democracy Work:
Lessons Learned from the Presidential Election*

Go to www.lwvma.org for essay questions,
rules & prize info

**Winners will read their essays
in Faneuil Hall, Boston**

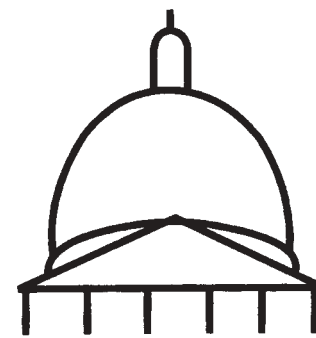
**Winners' teacher/advisor will receive
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*Encourage students and teachers
in your community and then...
plan to attend this special awards event.*

**Save the date!
April 10, 2005**

The Online Student Essay Contest
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Join us at
The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Annual

DAY ON THE HILL

**Wednesday, March 23, 2005
State House, Boston**

9:00 a.m. Registration & Reception – Nurses' Hall

Invite your legislators to join us for a light breakfast –
and the chance to talk with you, with League members from across the state,
and with LWVM's program specialists.

10:00 – 12:30 Program - Gardner Auditorium

***Election Issues:
Where Do We Go from Here?***

Invited Honored Guest

Governor Mitt Romney

Featured Speakers

Speaker of the House Salvatore F. DiMasi

**Secretary of the Commonwealth
William Francis Galvin**

*Including
League Program Specialists Update*

We look forward to seeing you there!