



THE MASSACHUSETTS VOTER

April 2005

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

Volume 81, Number 2

Happy 85th Birthday League of Women Voters

Create Our Future at Convention 2005



Lt. Governor
Kerry Healy

Congressman
Barney Frank

By Erin Pastuszewski
LWVM Membership & Training
Vice President

There's something for every League member at the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Convention 2005. Focusing on "Creating our Future in a Dynamic Society," the Convention features valuable workshops, exciting speakers, a big 85th birthday bash, and of course the opportunity to forge the League's game plan for the next two years.

Please join us for Convention at the convenient Wyndham Westborough on May 13 and 14.

Convention kicks off with our opening lunch on Friday, May 13, featuring guest speaker Lt. Governor Kerry Healy. Friday afternoon offers a set of five workshops to help League members grow as leaders in their communities, followed by the first plenary session of Convention, part one of our biennial business meeting.

We will cap off the day with a reception and the League's 85th Birthday Banquet. Join us to celebrate 85 years of making democracy work with guest speaker Congressman Barney Frank and our guests of honor, past presidents of the Massachusetts League. Caucuses and convention Q&As follow the banquet. (See related articles on convention speakers and workshops.)

Saturday, May 14 offers a full day of League networking, learning, planning and decision-making.

Sample two workshops from a menu of ten in the

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CONVENTION 2005

Creating Our Future in a Dynamic Society
May 13 and 14, 2005
Wyndham Westborough

There will be a special celebration at State Convention in May 2005. As part of the celebration, we will honor those who helped to build the legacy of the League in this state — our past presidents. Some of our "League legends" will be at the convention banquet on Friday, May 13th. (Please join us for this special event by calling the League office at 617-523-2999 or by e-mail at lwvma@lwvma.org for reservation.) As of the printing of this *The Massachusetts Voter*, we have confirmations from Lucy Wilson Benson, Point Bates and Susan Wiltshire.

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LWVM Kicks off Project to Empower Voters, Safeguard Voting

By Risa Nyman
LWVM Executive Director

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, long-known for its outstanding work in the field of voter education and electoral reform, is launching a strategic, comprehensive project to ensure that voting in Massachusetts is easy and fair and that voters are engaged and informed. Massachusetts needs both major reforms in many areas of voting procedures and better outreach to marginalized constituencies if we are to expand into a more inclusive democracy. The League has ambitious plans to help make this happen.

LWVM's Empowering Voters Project will work with coalitions and constituencies that have been underrepresented in the electoral process to give citizens the tools they need to speak up and be heard. It will help create a more informed voting population, increase voter turnout, close the participation gap, and advocate for needed election law reforms. The result will be educated, engaged citizens who will actively work to empower themselves by voting and participating in civic society.

This Project is a natural outgrowth of the League's award-winning Vote! 2004 Campaign. Throughout that Campaign, the League was aware of the many obstacles that impede and discourage voters. Although Massachusetts has been fortunate to



have escaped the problems that have afflicted other states — such as controversial elections recounts, allegations of electoral fraud, problems with new voting machines, and biased election officials — we must not wait for a crisis to happen before we act. The damage caused by voters losing confidence in the value of their votes can be irreparable, especially in communities that already feel disenfranchised and unwelcome at the polls.

The Empowering Voters Project reflects the dual mission of the League to educate citizens about voting and elections and to influence public policy. It is a proactive approach to safeguarding voting in the Commonwealth.

What does the Project plan to accomplish?

The Project will focus on resolving a number of problems that impede voters' full participation in the electoral process as well as advocating for the best practices in voting procedures. It will educate citizens and public officials about and lobby for reforms that will make voting easier and more equitable. Some of these much-needed reforms are unconditional absentee voting, Election Day registration, the right to leave work to vote, ensuring that election administrators remain neutral, and easy access to voter registration forms. The Project will also encompass the League's ongoing efforts on campaign finance reform and redistricting reform.

Six months before the November
(continued on page 7)

Happy 85th Birthday to the League of Women Voters

It is 2005, and we are celebrating 85 years of a great idea!

Carrie Chapman Catt, the founder of the League of Women Voters, said in 1920, "Winning the vote is only an opening wedge, but to learn to use it is a bigger task." [Voting is] "A tool to build a better nation...to provide for the common welfare...to help humanity upward." The League is proud to continue Catt's vision through its voter education and advocacy work in Massachusetts.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Madhu Sridhar
LWVM President

LEADING THE WAY

The celebration of the 85th anniversary of the League of Women Voters offers a perfect opportunity to reflect on our organization's rich and inspiring history as we build on our successes to chart the future.

The League of Women Voters was founded to serve a pressing vital need. The path to obtaining political expression and participation for women was a long and difficult one. Those who led the struggle were women of vision, courage, tenacity, and commitment.

In the 1800s when women started lobbying for their right to an education, the right to speak in public, the right to sign a contract and the right to have custody of their children after divorce, the visionary leaders recognized that they could leverage all other rights if only they could gain the right to vote. It was in 1848 that the women's suffrage movement was born uniting a diverse group of women and a few farsighted men. They made a commitment to this important cause and courageously led the uphill battle. Many of the suffragists knew that they may not live to see their goals reached or their dreams become reality. The saga of women's struggle for participation in the political process took place over several decades and was a true test of their tenacity.

In February 1920, six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the League was launched as an independent organization at the National Women's Suffrage Association's annual convention. The women who had fought so hard to gain suffrage for themselves and generations to come created the League to empower citizens, particularly women, to participate in political life. Euphoria radiates from accounts of that conven-

tion. Wrote one observer: "How happy everybody was! How victory electrified the air! At 2:30 p.m., the convention was called to order. It was called to disorder – the gayest disorder that ever was."

Celebrating our 85th anniversary serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring debt we owe the suffragists. Eighty-five years back, women could not vote in federal elections. They could not hold federal office. And they could not serve on juries. Women had no political voice. Though there is still a long way to go, today women are a powerful force in civic life. In November 2004 elections, over half of those who voted were women. Today, 49 women – of a total of 200 – serve in the Massachusetts Legislature. And both our Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court are women.

Our 85th birthday is also a good time to remember all the League has done to make democracy work in our own communities, in the state and in the nation. We not only gain a sense of pride from the monumental impact our organization has had in shaping our country's democracy, but we also renew our respect for the League's strength that continues to lead to our success. The winning of the right to vote in 1920 led to the inception of the League of Women Voters and the beginning of another long journey...a journey that continues as we carry on the League's mission of protecting *all* citizens' right to fully participate in the democratic process.

This year, the League is launching the Empowering Voters Project, an advocacy and public education campaign that aims to strengthen and renew the basic tenets of American democracy.

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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.

This ambitious statewide project seeks to protect and improve electoral processes through election and voting reforms and campaign finance reform and advance representative government through nonpartisan redistricting.

The Empowering Voters Project is just the most recent demonstration of the League's enduring mission and bold vision. Please join me at Convention 2005 on May 13-14 to learn more about this vital project. But as importantly, come to Convention to help celebrate the League's vibrant 85 years of encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund, the Center for Women Policy Studies
& Women's Environment Development Organization present a forum

US Foreign Policy & Its Impact on Women: International Trafficking in Women April 30, 2005 — 9 a.m.

Healey Library at University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125
617-287-5000

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Laura Lederer, Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons to the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs
Connecticut State Senator Andrea Stillman
Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark Zuckerman

Panelists

Dr. Wendy Chapkis, University of Southern Maine
Dr. Sea Ling Cheng, Wellesley College and Columbia University
Joe and Brigitte Collins, Maiti Nepal
Elizabeth Hopper, Ph.D., Associate Director/Program Coordinator at Project Reach

Registration & coffee at 8:30 a.m.

Directions & map at www.umb.edu/about/directions.html

Co-sponsors: the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) at the Kennedy School of Government, UMass Boston Women's Studies Department, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, American Association of University Women of MA, League of United Latin American Citizens, Black Women for Policy Action, Massachusetts Council of Churches, Caucus of Women Legislators and the National Organization for Women, Massachusetts Chapter.

League Forum to Focus on U.S. Foreign Policy & Trafficking in Women

By Carol Reimers
LWVM Citizen Education Vice President

Katya, with a 2-year-old daughter and a failing marriage in the Czech Republic, followed the advice of a "friend" that she could make good money as a waitress in the Netherlands. A Czech trafficker drove her, along with four other young women, to Amsterdam where, joined by a Dutch trafficker, Katya was taken to a brothel. After saying "I will not do this," she was told, "Yes, you will if you want your daughter back in the Czech Republic to live." After years of threats and forced prostitution, Katya was rescued by a cab driver. She is now working at a hospital and studying for a degree in social work.

Traffickers took Khan, an 11-year-old girl living in the hills of Laos, to an embroidery factory in Bangkok. There she and other children worked 14 hours a day for food and clothing, but no wages. After protesting, Khan was beaten. After further protests, Khan was stuffed into a closet where the factory owner's son shot her in the face with a BB

(continued on page 3)

Focus on U.S. Foreign (continued from page 2)

gun and poured industrial chemicals over her. Khan was rescued and is now receiving plastic surgery and counseling at a Thai government shelter.

These are just two stories that dramatically exemplify the different variations of human trafficking happening today in nearly every corner of the world. The human impact of trafficking in women is devastating and immeasurable.

What does it mean to traffic in persons? What can we possibly do in our own community and state about international trafficking in women? Are there any local solutions that would help victims?

You can learn some answers to these questions and about the difficulties that face the world as it tries to eradicate this form of modern-day slavery at a forum sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts on Saturday, April 30 at the Healey Library at University of Massachusetts Boston. The forum, "US Foreign Policy and Its Impact on Women: International Trafficking in Women," is part of "Women Engaging Globally," a joint project of the League of Women Voters of the United State Education Fund, the Center for Women Policy Studies and Women's Environment Development Organization.

Laura J. Lederer, JD, Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons to the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula J. Dobriansky, is the forum's keynote speaker. A panel of distinguished experts will also discuss "the community response in action."

The forum will explore what the community and state response should be to trafficking in women. Some of the Boston area co-sponsors of the forum are the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, Women and Public Policy Program (WAPPP) at the Kennedy School of Government, UMass Boston Women's Studies Department, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, American Association of University Women of MA, League of United Latin American Citizens, Black Women for Policy Action, Massachusetts Council of Churches, Caucus of Women Legislators and the National Organization for Women, Massachusetts Chapter.

The State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons covers this issue worldwide. The pursuit and prosecution of human traffickers is also a high priority of the Department of Justice. Traffickers often prey on individuals who are poor, frequently unemployed or underemployed, and who may lack access to social safety nets, predominantly women and children in certain countries.

People are snared into trafficking by various means. Victims are often lured with false promises of good jobs and better lives, and then forced to work under brutal and inhuman conditions such as prostitution, pornography and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. They are exploited as domestic servants or forced into slavery-like labor conditions in factories and fields. Victims suffer physical and emotional abuse, rape, threats against self and family, passport theft, and physical restraint. It is among the fastest growing criminal activities, occurring both worldwide and in individual countries. Annually, at least 600,000-800,000 people, mostly women and children, are trafficked across borders worldwide, including 14,500-17,500 persons into the United States.

On the federal level, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlaws slav-

ery and involuntary servitude. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 supplements existing laws and establishes new tools and resources to combat trafficking in persons and to provide services and protections for victims. The forum will explore what legislation could be enacted in Massachusetts to address trafficking here.

Please join concerned League and community members who want to raise awareness of this issue on April 30.

(Source for information on trafficking: U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons)

Happy Birthday (continued from page 1)



Point Bates, LWVM President 1967-1969, with Governor Volpe.



Lucy Wilson Benson, LWVM President 1961-1965



Susan Wiltshire, LWVM President 1977-1979



Risa Nyman, LWVM President 1989-1993

Lucy Wilson Benson needs no introduction to League members in Massachusetts or the nation. She served as LWVM President from 1961-1965 and as LWVUS President from 1968-1974. She was a member of the first cabinet under Governor Dukakis and she served as Undersecretary of State in the Carter Administration. Her record of accomplishment in and outside of the League is extraordinary.

In 1964, Ms. Benson urged League members to celebrate their accomplishments and forge ahead in their reform efforts. She wrote in *The Massachusetts Voter*, "It is both fitting and proper to recognize that an extraordinarily difficult job has been finished extraordinarily well. It took us seventeen months of concentrated, almost unrelenting effort to produce this political miracle, as it has been labeled by some observers who believe that making the office of governor both responsible and visible by curbing the powers of the Governor's Council is the basic reform of our state's political structure. The climate for reform in Massachusetts is bright and clear - all citizens must now be ready to move ahead and build upon what they have begun."

Point Bates, President of the LWVM from 1967-1969, is flying in from Florida to join us for the 85th celebration. When Ms. Bates became president, she wrote in her first article in *The Massachusetts Voter*, "To be a member of the

league is a very special thing. Through the league we learn to practice the arts of democracy. We learn and demonstrate to others that citizens can be effective in their government. League members believe that the strength of democracy lies in participation of the individual in his government, that politics is not a dirty word and that government is as much the concern of women as it is of men."

Susan Wiltshire, President of LWVM from 1977-1979, will be at the convention. Ms. Wiltshire summed up the work of the League in *The Massachusetts Voter* in 1977 in this way, "Unfortunately there are many who don't share that belief, who feel that one person or group can make little difference. That view is truly a self-fulfilling prophecy. Unless we work to keep government responsive, it will become remote and inaccessible. We keep the paths open by keeping them well traveled."

Risa Nyman, President of LWVM from 1989-1993, will be at the convention in her latest League role as Executive Director of LWVM. Ms. Nyman summed up her feelings about the League in her last column in *The Massachusetts Voter* in 1993, "There is no better organization than the League to promote citizen participation in our democracy. The League epitomizes the citizen activist. Our mission is to reach out to the community to involve others in electoral politics and government. The League's credibility, nonpartisanship and grassroots structure make it the ideal organization to bring elections, on all levels of government, closer to the voters."

We expect that other past presidents to be joining us, and we hope that you will be there too!

PAST PRESIDENTS OF LWVM

Mrs. George Fearing	1920-1923
Mrs. Arthur G. Rotch	1923-1926
Mrs. Robert Denormandie	1926-1929
Mary Tenney Healey	1929-1931
Mrs. Ronald Baker	1931-1933
Mrs. Henry Randolph Brigham	1933-1935
Mrs. Richard H. Field	1935-1937
Merle Fainsod	1937-1939
Mrs. LaRue Brown	1939-1942
Suvia Whittemore	1942-1945
Ruth Lurie	1945-1948
Mrs. Alan Morse	1948-1951
Mrs. Edgar Driscoll	1951-1953
Helene Stoneman	1953-1955
Peggy Bruce	1955-1957
Elizabeth McKinstry	1957-1959
Doris Smith	1959-1961
Lucy Wilson Benson	1961-1965
Rae Kipp	1965-1967
Harriet Bates	1967-1969
Lotte E. Scharfman	1969-1970
Errol Jacobsen	1970-1971
Margaret Lynch	1971-1973
Florence Rubin	1973-1977
Susan Wiltshire	1977-1979
Barabara Fegan	1979-1981
Margaret Bliss	1981-1984
Susan Shaer	1984-1987
Arlene Stamm	1987-1989
Risa Nyman	1989-1993
Deena Whitfield	1993-1995
Nancy Carapezza	1995-2003
Dona Kemp	2001-2003
Madhu Sridhar	2003-

LWVM Program in Action:

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 Mass Vote, on a bill for public financing of elections. Many members of the Legislature are also working with the coalition. The coalition continues to work toward reaching consensus on the content of the bill. Accordingly, we have decided to delay filing a bill. This new Campaign Finance Reform bill will differ from the Clean Elections law that was repealed, incorporating suggestions from past experience and input from the Legislature.

Equal Rights:

Betsy Dunn, Specialist

•SD1831/HD0993 – An Act to Provide for Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies. Lead sponsors are Sen. Therese Murray (Senate) and Rep. Ruth Balser & Rep. Ronald Mariano (House).

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 during debate on it as a budget amendment, Rep. Mariano, chair of the Insurance Committee, opposed it. During the summer Rep. Balser and Rep. Mariano worked out their concerns so that they could co-sponsor it in this session.

• An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in Insurance Policies. Lead Sponsor Sen. Dianne Wilkerson.

This legislation has been filed in every legislative session since 1982 and has passed the Senate in several recent sessions. The House has not acted.

The provisions of the bill were in force as regulations 1988-91 without any adverse effects on either the insurance industry or consumers. A suit by the insurance industry, however, ended in a ruling by the Supreme Judicial Court that the Insurance Commissioner did not have the authority to issue the regulations and that the legislature must change the provision in the law that permits sex-based rating in premiums and benefits.

• HD3691 – An Act to Provide Timely Access to Emergency Contraceptives (EC). Lead sponsor Rep. Douglas Petersen.

This bill requires that all hospital emergency rooms make emergency contraceptives available to rape survivors. The bill also allows pharmacists to dispense emergency contraception, through a collaborative agreement with a physician. Six other states have passed similar legislation. This legislation died in the last session without a debate or vote. With new leadership in the House we hope for an opportunity for both.

Health Care:

Judy Deutsch, Specialist

• A new Massachusetts Health Care Trust Bill (An Act to Establish the Massachusetts Health Care Trust) was filed by its lead sponsors, Sen. Steven Tolman and Rep. Frank Hynes. Other senators and representatives have signed on as co-sponsors. Please check to see whether or not yours have. (You can call the LWVM office for this information.) If they have not, please urge them to do so because this is the only bill that provides

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Justice Denied: Revise Drug Mandatory Sentences

By Patricia Muldoon

LWVM Administration of Justice Specialist

Prisoners in Massachusetts are incarcerated at higher levels and receive less training than national averages. The state spends more on prisons (\$830 million) than on public higher education (\$816 million). The state and county prison population has grown fivefold over the last thirty years, even though the violent crime rate has fallen.

At the same time monies for education and other programs to reduce recidivism have been drastically cut. Almost all prisoners in the state are released, but half of those released will return to prison within three years. The Department of Correction and some sheriffs are taking some positive steps to try to reduce recidivism, which we should monitor. However, legislation is urgently needed to provide fairness and alternatives in sentencing.

Prison cells are replacing detox and mental health facilities as housing for the sick. The state's current sentencing laws impose a mandatory prison term on many nonviolent drug offenders, regardless of the circumstances surrounding their crime and despite any steps they have taken while in prison to improve their education and work skills. Although those convicted of violent crimes can be eligible for parole after serving two-thirds of their sentences, drug-related offenders must usually serve their full terms with less access to programs. Most of them serve two- to five-year sentences; some serve as many as 15 years.

Alternative sentencing, rather than high-secu-

(continued on page 7)

Court Rules State Meets Its Constitutional Duty to Fund Schools

By Mary Frantz

LWVM Education Specialist

On February 15 the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court handed down its long-awaited decision in the Hancock v. Driscoll education finance case. In a 5-2 decision the Court did not find that the Commonwealth is failing to meet its constitutional obligations to fund an adequate education for Massachusetts' public school students and denied the plaintiffs' motion for further relief. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts had signed onto an amicus brief supporting the plaintiffs in this case.

"Though the decision disappoints us," said LWVM President Madhu Sridhar, "the League will continue our longstanding and zealous advocacy for equal educational opportunity and equitable funding for all students." The League is a founding member of the Council for Fair School Finance, the statewide coalition that supported both the McDuffy and Hancock cases.

Hancock v. Driscoll is essentially a continuation of the McDuffy v. Secretary of Education case in which the Supreme Judicial Court in 1993 ruled that the state has a constitutional duty to ensure that all children in Massachusetts are provided an

(continued on page 7)

"Meeting Basic Human Needs" Committee Forming

By Clare Gordon

LWVM Meeting Basic Human Needs Specialist

This year the waivers granted by the federal government to Massachusetts to conduct its own version of welfare reform expire. It's not yet known how Congress and the president will revise the law and what demands will be passed on to Massachusetts. But the League must be prepared to take action when changes are initiated through legislation as well as through the budget process, and we're looking for members interested in monitoring how Massachusetts implements welfare reform.

Our Meeting Basic Human Needs position comes from LWVUS, but state Leagues are responsible for monitoring how welfare reform proceeds in their own territory. Income Assistance, Support Services (including Job Training, Education and Child Care), Housing Supply and Transportation are all under the umbrella of this position. In addition, LWVM has more specific positions on Child Care and Transportation.

If you would like to help research or lobby on these issues, please contact Clare Gordon, LWVM Meeting Basic Human Needs Specialist, at the League office, 617-523-2999 or cgordon@lwwma.org.

State Establishes New Department of Early Education

By Mary Frantz

LWVM Education Specialist

Last summer the Massachusetts Legislature created a new, independent Board of Early Education and Care and a consolidated Department of Early Education and Care. The goal of this reorganization is to provide universal access to high-quality early childhood education.

Specifically, the board is charged with:

- overseeing and supervising the administration of a high-quality system of public and private early education and care
- overseeing the development and implementation of a program of voluntary, universally accessible high-quality early childhood education to all preschool-aged children
- overseeing the development and management of a kindergarten readiness assessment system and a comprehensive evaluation of early education and care programs
- overseeing the development and implementation of a workforce development system designed to support the education, training and compensation of the early education and care workforce, including all center, family child care, infant, toddler preschool and school-age provider

The new department merges the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), Early Learning Services currently in the Department of Education (DOE) and possibly Early Intervention in the Department of Public Health (DPH).

The Board of Early Education and Care will consist of nine members: the Secretary of Health

(continued on next page)

and Human Services, the Commissioner of the Department of Education, the Chancellor of Higher Education, and six members appointed by the Governor to include representatives of a variety of early childhood constituencies as well as experts in the field. The new department is scheduled to begin operating July 1, 2005.

The legislation also established a planning process. A three-member Council on Early Education and Care – the Commissioners of OCCS, DOE and DPW – was charged with developing a plan to consolidate existing state early education and care functions into the new department. A 21-member Early Education and Care Advisory Committee was charged with making recommendations to the Joint Committee on Education on “how the state can build a first-rate education and care system that provides every 3-5 year old preschool child access to a high-quality early education and care program.” Both groups submitted their recommendations to the legislature last December. The recommendations are on the web at www.mass.gov/Eeohhs2/docs/occs/r_earlyed_carecouncil_rpt.pdf and www.mass.gov/legis/reports/EECAC_Report_12-15-04.pdf.

It is clear that there is still much work to be done in order to create an effective consolidated system. Some members of the Advisory Committee are concerned that the Commissioners’ recommendations for service delivery, similar to the current OCCS model of direct contracts and vouchers, would jeopardize high-quality education and care. They feel that this approach will do away with the Community Partnership of Children (CPC) model of local collaboration and dispersal of funds. Public schools have used CPC funding to support at-risk children. The funding has been used to raise the quality of early education and care programs in both public and private settings and to provide comprehensive services to families. The Advisory Committee recommends local control of all funding, professionalization of early childhood teachers, adequate funding, state standards and guidelines for preschool learning experience and a permanent advisory council.

The League will continue to monitor the development of the new Department of Early Education and Care. We will be guided by LWVM positions on education and day care and LWVUS positions on child care and early intervention for children at risk and take action as necessary to advocate for high-quality programs that meet our criteria.

**Want to
Make a Difference
in
Early Education & Care?**

If you have an interest in the issues described in the accompanying article, you can help by becoming the League Early Education and Care Specialist. Please contact Diane Jeffery, Vice President for Program and Action, 617-523-2999 or djeffery@lwwma.org.

Spotlight on Local Leagues

By Lora Goldenberg

After the busy fall election season, local Leagues in Massachusetts barely had time to catch their breath before beginning their traditional winter and spring programs of consensus, program planning, and preparations for local elections and Town Meeting.

Several local Leagues have been weighing in on important issues in their community. The Wellesley League bulletin’s tagline exemplifies this effort: “Non-Partisan • Civic-Minded • Action-Oriented.”

The **Falmouth** League worked hard to pass the Community Preservation Act at Town Meeting and will continue its efforts at the polls. The **Cape Cod Area** League completed its study on wind energy with a new local position supporting wind energy as “an important source of renewable energy both off shore and onshore.” The position emphasizes the need for regulatory guidelines from state and federal government.

The **Newton** League has been very active in its community. In the last few months the League wrote a letter to the local newspaper in support of Community Preservation funding for the CAN-DO project, which will preserve a historic home and provide affordable housing. The Newton League wrote to the Community Preservation Committee in support of their funding an accessory apartment incentive program. The League’s letter to the Alderman, Zoning and Planning Committee, and Finance Committee supported a proposed bylaw amendment allowing the Conservation Commission to level civil penalties of up to \$300 for certain environmental violations. The Newton League is also forming a committee to review the most recent Community Preservation projects. The League believes that many of the projects have been “lightly documented” and had little or no community support, and that many parks proposals have been approved without any sort of Master Plan for parks and playgrounds.

The Affordable Housing Committee of the **Plymouth Area** League prepared documentation refuting some claims of opponents of the proposed Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw for affordable housing options. The League’s testimony in favor of the bylaw resulted in the support of the Planning Board, Selectmen, and Advice and Finance Committee.

At a Special Town Meeting, the **Westford** League supported a \$13.5 million land purchase, which would be funded by Community Preservation monies, grants, and private donations.

The **Worcester Area** League held a highly successful general membership meeting on “Natural Resources: League Positions, Worcester’s Needs, What We Can Do.” The meeting identified four potential actions the League can undertake: (1) convening a coalition of environmental groups to encourage green buildings, toxic waste reduction, smart growth, and open space protection and acquisition; (2) encouraging and coordinating citizen participation in the 2005 Open Space Plan; (3) changing the name of the Department of Public Works to include its role in environment and natural resource management; and (4) supporting zoning reform to encourage smart growth.

Leagues across the state have kept their membership growing this year. The **Beverly** League president’s plan asked every member to (a) bring someone to a League event and introduce him or her to the President or another board member, (b) introduce the President to another organization the member belongs to where the President or Membership Chair can speak about the League, and (c) give names of prospective members to the President or Membership Chair. The **Acton Area** League adopted a membership scholarship policy that insures that no financial barrier would stand in the way of anyone wishing to join the League.

Leagues are holding legislative receptions of all kinds, developing Voter Guides, organizing warrant reviews, and holding workshops on how to run for office and how to participate in Town Meeting. The **Beverly** League organized a State of the City Forum where panelists asked questions of the Mayor, the City Council Vice President, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Finance Director. At fall Town Meeting, the **Norwood** League distributed its newly revised Town Meeting Guide, which includes information on parliamentary procedure, municipal finance, and the rules of Town Meeting. **Falmouth** League members volunteer to take attendance at Town Meeting for the Town Clerk.

The **Williamstown** League encourages participation in the LWVM student essay contest in its schools, as well as underwriting the “Real Women Essay Contest,” which asks kindergarten through high school students to describe the woman who has the most influence in their lives.

Throughout Massachusetts, Leagues are working to achieve positive change in their communities.

Join The League of Women Voters

Make a Lifetime of Difference

Annual Dues: Individual \$45 _____
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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.lwwma.org. Phone us at 617-523-2999.

Thank you for supporting the League of Women Voters

Learn and Network at Convention Workshops

By Erin Pastuszewski

LWVM Membership & Training Vice President

The Convention 2005 workshops (see table) will provide an ideal training ground for new League leaders, as well as newcomers to the League. Below are brief descriptions to guide your selections:

Friday, 1:45 - 3:15 p.m.

The Empowering Voters Project: Getting Your League Involved. Learn about this NEW project – a two-pronged approach to ensure that voting in Massachusetts is easy and fair and that voters are informed and engaged through education and advocacy.

Effective Citizen Advocacy. Is your League ready to get more involved in public policy discussions? Do you want to help your members and others become effective advocates for League positions? Come share your experiences and learn from others.

League Leaders' Workshop: Preparing for the Year Ahead. Are you about to step into a leadership role for your local League or renew your commitment? This workshop is for you.

Youth Projects for Local Leagues. This workshop offers ideas and resources for League projects involving young people from elementary school on up.

Encouraging Local Candidates to Run for Office. This "train the trainer" workshop will assist your League to encourage and train those who are thinking about running for office.

Saturday, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

League Moderator Training, Part I. Well-trained moderators are in great demand and can ensure fair, informative and interesting forums. This skills development workshop is for everyone from those who have never moderated to seasoned moderators.

Redistricting Reform: The Time is Now. Learn why we need redistricting reform in Massachusetts and how to get involved in the League's work on this issue.

Fundraising for Busy Leagues. What are the fundraising ideas that work for other Leagues? Be visible in your community and help finance your League at the same time.

Dynamic League Leadership: Creative Approaches When Typical is Impossible.

Leagues often need to find alternatives to a traditional board and committee structure. Learn how others have created new ways to run a vibrant, inclusive, effective League.

Can't Live Without It: Recruiting and Involving Younger Members. Join us to examine League practices and positions and how they relate to younger peoples' lives. This workshop will provide suggestions for projects and initiatives to attract younger members.

Saturday, 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

League Moderator Training, Part II. Complete your training in this companion session to Part I described above. Hone your moderating skills and participate in a practice session.

The Empowering Voters Project: Getting Your League Involved. See description above for this workshop also offered on Friday.

Balancing Justice in Massachusetts: How to Establish Public Dialogues. Join Matt Leighninger of the Study Circle Resource Center for this session on organizing citizen roundtable meetings to set justice and corrections systems priorities. Explore how to recruit participants, organize dialogues on tough issues, and find solutions together.

Local League Diversity Success Stories. Exchange tips on how Leagues have successfully reached out to diverse groups or communities (such as youth, people with disabilities and "minorities").

Working in a Volunteer Culture: Getting Along While Getting it Done. Join leadership consultant Barbara S. Hyle for an interactive session on making the most of your League's mix of personalities and styles (on and off-board).

Be sure to sign up early, as space may be limited. More detailed workshop descriptions are available at the LWVM website, www.lwvma.org.

Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey & Rep. Barney Frank to Speak at Convention

by Erin Pastuszewski

LWVM Membership & Training Vice President

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts will welcome two distinguished speakers to our Convention on May 13-14 at the Wyndham Westborough.

The opening luncheon on Friday, May 13, will feature Lt. Governor Kerry Healey. Kerry Healey, a Beverly resident, was elected Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 2002. She is the primary contact for municipal leaders regarding local finance and budget issues and leads several initiatives in public safety and criminal justice, her areas of expertise. Lt. Governor Healey currently chairs several special commissions for the Governor focused on criminal justice reform, sexual and domestic violence, homelessness and the maritime economy. She also presides over the Governor's Council, the body responsible for confirming the Governor's judicial appointments.

Lt. Governor Healey previously was a law and public safety consultant at Abt Associates in Cambridge, and served as chairman of the Massachusetts Republican Party. She has also been a member of the adjunct faculty at Endicott College and the University of Massachusetts at Lowell.

Congressman Barney Frank of Newton, who represents the Fourth District of Massachusetts, is our featured speaker at the 85th Birthday Banquet, on Friday evening. Past LWVM presidents will also be honored at the banquet.

Congressman Frank has served in Congress since 1981 and is the ranking Democratic member of the House Financial Services Committee, which oversees the securities, insurance, banking and housing industries and federal financial services regulators including the Federal Reserve, the Treasury and the SEC. He also served on the House Select Committee on Homeland Security.

Previously, Congressman Frank served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives for eight years and as chief assistant to Mayor Kevin White

of Boston. He has taught at several Boston area universities, including the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Come to these special Convention 2005 events to hear our dynamic speakers, honor past League presidents and celebrate the League's 85th birthday! Registration information is on page 8 and on the LWVM's website, www.lwvma.org.

Create Our Future Convention (cont. from p. 1)

morning, and then head off to the Convention Awards Luncheon. We'll hear remarks from LWVUS Board member Olivia Thorne and recognize local Leagues and members for excellence in voters service, League bulletins, membership growth and more. We plan to highlight the contributions of some of our newest members with our Dyna-Member Award for those who have brought energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas to invigorate their Leagues.

After the Awards Luncheon, we'll wind up Convention at the second plenary session. Convention will elect officers and directors to serve on LWVM's 2005-2007 board, approve the LWVM budget for the next year and adopt a state League program and action issues.

Program is the keystone of the League organization, the basis for both education and action efforts. League program consists of those governmental issues that League members choose for concerted study and action. It includes adopted positions, upon which action is taken, and issues for study that will lead to a position and action.

Every two years, through the program planning process, League members review the current LWVM program and make recommendations for changes, ensuring that the League's efforts remain focused on those issues that are most current and relevant. At convention, delegates vote to adopt the LWVM program for the next two years. Board-recommended items require a majority vote for adoption. Items suggested by local Leagues during the program planning process but not recommended by the LWVM board require a two-thirds vote. Program proposals under consideration by the LWVM board fall in many areas, including education, health care, corrections, fiscal policy and housing.

If you would like to be a delegate for your local League at Convention, contact your local League president as soon as possible. A limited number of LWVM members-at-large can request delegate status as well, and should contact the LWVM office (617-523-2999, lwvma@lwvma.org).

All League members are welcome to register to attend the Convention as observers. Observers can go to workshops and participate in all other Convention activities but cannot vote at the plenary sessions. League members and their guests are invited to attend the Friday lunch and the 85th Birthday Banquet that evening. There's a registration form for the Convention and the lunch and banquet on page 8 and on the LWVM website (www.lwvma.org). Also check the LWVM website for updates on speakers and activities.

We hope to see you at Convention 2005 in May. It's your chance to Create the Future of our League!

Duty to Fund Schools (continued from page 4)

adequate education “without regard to the fiscal capacity of the community or district in which such children live.” In response the Legislature passed the Education Reform Act of 1993, which required the adoption of Curriculum Frameworks that define the standard of adequate education and established a Foundation Budget that defines the minimum funding level needed to provide an adequate educational program.

In *Hancock v. Driscoll* attorneys for the plaintiffs (students from 19 Massachusetts school districts) went back to the Supreme Judicial Court arguing the Commonwealth is failing to meet its constitutional requirement because the Foundation Budget is inadequate. The plaintiffs requested relief in the form of a nonpartisan 21st Century Foundation Budget Commission to determine the resources and funding necessary to teach to the Curriculum Frameworks.

Writing for the majority Chief Justice Margaret Marshall agreed that “sharp disparities in the educational opportunities, and the performance, of some Massachusetts public school students persist.” However, she concluded that while significant shortcomings still exist in the public educational system, these “do not constitute the egregious, Statewide abandonment of the constitutional duty identified in that [McDuffy] case.”

The Court did explicitly reaffirm the McDuffy decision, saying that the legislature and Governor have the constitutional duty to provide education in the public schools and to support schools with the appropriate funding. However, the Court found that at present the Commonwealth is meeting this requirement. Justice Marshall wrote, “But the Commonwealth is moving systemically to address...deficiencies and continues to make education reform a fiscal priority. A system mired in failure has given way to one that...shows a steady trajectory of progress.”

LWV President Sridhar agreed with the Court’s decision on some points. “We’re heartened by the Court’s reaffirmation of the state’s obligation to all Massachusetts schoolchildren and its acknowledgement that funding disparities still exist. Both these findings will strengthen our efforts to continue reminding the legislature of its constitutional duty to finance the Commonwealth’s public schools both adequately and equitably.”

Empower Voters (continued from page 1)

2006 election the Project will swing into full election mode. As the League has always done, the Project will provide nonpartisan, reliable information about candidates and ballot questions to voters across the state through a variety of media, including on our www.votinginfo.info website.

Who will benefit from this Project?

All Massachusetts voters will benefit from the Project’s many initiatives, but the Project will especially reach out to those who comprise the “participation gap” in the electoral process. They are new citizens, young people, ethnic and racial minorities, low income groups, those formerly incarcerated and the homeless.

When will the Project begin?

The Project begins now so that improvements in voting procedures and processes are in place for the November 2006 election. The Project will culminate on Election Day 2006 when all Massachusetts voters go to the polls prepared and informed.

Program in Action (continued from page 4)

coverage for all Massachusetts residents. Other bills would cover more people only incrementally and employ a multiplicity of payers. A multiplicity of payers causes huge administration costs – as much as 40 cents of every so-called health care dollar – and thus ensures that universal coverage will never be reached.

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

Redistricting:

Cathy Dowd, Specialist

• S.12, the “Independent Redistricting Commission” constitutional amendment, sponsored by the League and other members of the Fair Districts Coalition, now has 55 co-sponsors in the Senate and House. S.12 would make it impossible for legislators to use redistricting as a tool to create safe seats for incumbents. As a result, it would increase electoral competition and accountability to voters, preserve the voting strength of communities and minority groups, and increase community involvement in the political process.

As a constitutional amendment, S.12 must pass in the constitutional convention in two successive sessions, and then pass a public referendum.

Our action plan for 2005 calls for public education on redistricting via forums, letters to the editor and other forms of publicity in the spring and summer, followed by a signature campaign in the fall. If we can gather 66,000 valid signatures, then the bill needs only 25% of the votes in the constitutional convention to pass, rather than 50%. Please contact Cathy Dowd (cdowd@lwvma.org or 617-523-2999) if you are interested in learning more on redistricting or are interested in joining the Redistricting Committee.

Justice Denied (continued from page 4)

rity incarceration – especially for nonviolent offenders – can increase public safety and reduce cost. Parole, which the League has long supported, needs to be provided more often. Incarceration costs the state \$36,000 to \$50,000 per prisoner each year. In comparison, the state spends about \$4000 a year to supervise a person on parole.

This situation would be mitigated by a bill, refiled this legislative session by state Sen. Cynthia Creem, that would allow individuals with mandatory minimum drug sentences to be eligible for parole after serving two-third of their sentence in prison, matching the current eligibility standards for those convicted of violent crimes.

This bill will:

- Improve prospects for rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders to the community. Right now, most drug offenders are released from medium or high security prisons directly to the community without parole. Reform of mandatory minimum laws should provide for a portion of the sentence to be served in the community with parole supervision.
- Mitigate disproportionate impact on minorities. Mandatory drug sentences have a larger impact on minorities. 80% of those convicted under mandatory minimum drug sentences are minorities; 34% of individuals convicted of other crimes are minorities.
- Mitigate the cost of over-incarceration and freeing up funds for other critical needs. Incarceration costs the state ten times the amount needed to supervise a person on parole.

Urge your legislators to support this bill to make our correction policies more humane and cost-effective.

EMPOWERING VOTERS PROJECT: A Force for Change

Voter Education Agenda

- Promote reforms for easy and fair voting
- Provide reliable voting information
- Address low participation rates
- Decrease discrimination in voting and at polls



Advocacy Agenda

- Increase voter registration and turnout
- Ensure that voting is equitable and easy
- Boost voter confidence in electoral system and elected officials

Watch for more information about the Empowering Voters Project and how you can be part of this exciting initiative in future *Massachusetts Voters* and on the League’s website, www.lwvma.org.



League of Women Voters® of Massachusetts

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League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
CONVENTION 2005

Registration and Reservation Form
May 13 and 14, 2005
Wyndham Westborough

Please check the appropriate boxes.

Registrant Name	Address	Phone and Email	Registration* \$95 After 4/11/05 \$105	Friday Lunch \$20	Friday Banquet \$33	Total/ person

* Please note: The registration fee (\$95) includes entrance to all convention sessions and lunch on Saturday, May 14. It does not include Friday lunch (\$20) or banquet (\$33).

TOTAL \$: _____

Make checks payable to LWVM or complete credit card information below, and send forms to: LWVM Convention 2005, 133 Portland St., Boston, MA 02114, Fax: (617) 248-0881

Credit Card number (MC/VISA/AmEx) _____

Name as appears on card _____ Exp. Date _____

Registration deadline: April 11, 2005
Late registration deadline: April 29, 2005

Hotel Reservations and Information

- Hotel address: 5400 Computer Drive, Westborough, MA 01581
- Go to <http://www.wyndham.com/groupevents/388LeagueofWomenVoters/main.wnt> or call 508-366-5511. Be sure to tell them that you are registering for Convention 2005 with the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts.
- Room rates: single and double rooms: \$99 + tax
- If you have special dietary needs or need special accommodations, please specify below:

Workshop Registration

- To register for workshops, please complete and submit a workshop registration form, available at our website, www.lwvma.org, or by calling our office, 617-523-2999.