



The Massachusetts Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

September 2006
v. 82, no. 2



League Victory on Absentee Voting Amendment Progress for Voting Rights and Confidence Bill

■ by Cathy Dowd
Vice President, Program & Action

The League achieved a major legislative victory for its Empowering Voters Project when the Constitutional Convention voted on July 12 to advance the removal of constitutional restrictions on absentee voting. In addition, the Voting Rights and Confidence Bill has passed both the House and the Senate in slightly different forms, and we are hopeful it will be enacted during informal session this summer.

Together, these measures will go a long way towards increasing voter participation in Massachusetts by making voting easier, informing voters of their rights, and ensuring voter confidence in the system.

The League, in cooperation with the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Election Laws, Senator Edward Augustus and Representative Anthony Petrucci, drafted the constitutional amendment to allow unconditional absentee voting, as well as the "Strengthening Voting Rights and Confidence" bill. The dedication of Senator Augustus and Representative Petrucci has been critical to our success to date, as has the support of Senate President Travaglini and Speaker DiMasi for election procedure reforms.

"These bills are part of the League's Empowering Voters Project to improve voting practices in the state," said LWV President Madhu Sridhar. "No other organization has the long-standing commitment of the League to

protecting voters' rights and working to insure the public's confidence in voting and in election results. Passage of these bills sends a clear message that Massachusetts will move into the 21st century by changing outdated voting practices, as has been done already in many other states."

The absentee voting amendment, which eliminates the archaic and unenforceable restrictions on absentee voting and allows anyone to vote by absentee ballot, must now be passed by the Constitutional Convention during the next legislative session before it can be put on the ballot in 2008. The amendment would allow more people to participate in the elec-

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LWV Citizen Ed Fund To Honor Paul La Camera with Guardian of Democracy Award September 21

■ by Robin Rich
Assistant Executive Director

This fall, the League of Women Voters Citizen Education Fund will proudly bestow its Inaugural Guardian of Democracy Award on Paul La Camera, General Manager of The WBUR Group and former President and Manager of WCVB-TV.

The award will be presented to La Camera at the Guardian of Democracy Award Dinner on September 21 at The Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. The Honorable Michael Dukakis, former Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will be the keynote speaker.

With our democracy under strain from so many forces: erosion of our civil liberties, low

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President's Message

Madhu Sridhar

Strengthening our Democracy

Citizens in Massachusetts will be heading to the polls this fall to elect their political leaders in a time of momentous political decisions affecting our lives and the lives of future generations.

As League members and activists in our communities, we must continue to remind voters that elections are about **issues**, **choices**, and **answers** whether the decision to be made is about candidates or ballot measures.

Many challenging **issues** face us today: educating our children to compete in the global market, funding public education at the optimum level, helping families cope with skyrocketing college tuitions, encouraging entrepreneurship, creating satisfying job opportunities, building a robust economy, reducing health care costs, providing affordable housing, addressing environmental hazards and much more.

To elect means to **choose**. Massachusetts, a state that enjoys the reputation as a birthplace of democracy and with a proud history of political debate, has, for the last two decades, ranked almost at the bottom among the states in terms of contested races. The number of contested seats in the Massachusetts Legislature declined from 75% in 1990 to a low of 29% in 2000. In 2004, the number of contested legislative races increased to just over half. But this year it's dropped to 32%; only 14 of the Senate's 40 seats and 50 of the 160 seats in the House are being contested. And only three of the 10 congressional incumbents have challengers this year.

A low rate of contested elections might reflect high levels of satisfaction with current elected officials or a lack of interest in politics. It could also be the result of the

high cost of mounting a competitive campaign here. But it also raises the question of where democracy is heading. In a state which is the home to three American Presidents and the oldest written constitution still in use in the world, this is a troubling trend.

Elections are also about **answers** – the straight talk we need from candidates about the steps they plan to take to address the pressing issues. It is about options confronting those running for offices as they respond to the issues. It is our job as citizens to demand that those running for office provide us with solutions rather than just listing problems. I know that as League members you will elevate the level of public discourse so that the issues of state and national importance are debated and citizens' voices are heard above the political rhetoric and sound bites.

The League of Women Voters has long understood the vital link between education and citizenship. After all, the League was founded on the belief that citizens need to understand the political process – from issues and governmental procedures to the positions of individual candidates – in order to participate effectively. Citizen participation is the thread that holds together our political system's ability to serve the common good. It is also a thread that is currently very frayed and in danger of breaking. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

The League is doing its share across the state to help voters understand that voting is one of the most effective ways of voicing their concerns and opinions about the things that matter to them most. We're organizing debates, reaching out to college



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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

campuses and underrepresented groups to register voters, encouraging college students to be poll workers, publicizing voters' rights and responsibilities, providing independent moderators and more. Our extensive one-stop website, www.votinginfo.info, provides reliable nonpartisan Massachusetts-specific voting information. Be sure to check it out for answers to all your voting and election-related questions.

For 86 years, people have looked to the League of Women Voters to provide nonpartisan, comprehensive information about elections and voting. Election 2006 will be no exception as we mobilize to make a difference in the Commonwealth and continue to work to strengthen our democracy here at home.



Join the League today!
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September 2006



Recruiting Young and Diverse Poll Workers MOTIVATE THE VOTE — BE A POLL WORKER

■ by Risa Nyman
Executive Director

Did you know that, according to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, the current national average age of a poll worker is 72? Given this, perhaps young voters would be reassured and inspired to see some of their peers working in the polling place.

As part of the League's Empowering Voters Project and to engage the next generation of voters and leaders, the League worked with Boston University's AdLab, a student-run ad agency, to develop a special ad campaign.

The ad campaign is based on the premise that more young people would vote and would be less intimidated at the polls if there were poll workers their age present. The campaign will also help cities and towns recruit much-needed poll workers so that elections can run more smoothly and efficiently.

The theme that AdLab developed "Motivate the Vote – Be a Poll Worker" emphasizes that

by working at the polls, young people can motivate their peers to vote. The ad has a simplicity and directness that is appealing. Ad campaign information, including the job description, responsibilities, and contact information for all election departments in the state, is available on the League's election and voting website, www.votinginfo.info.

The League is promoting this ad campaign through meetings with the Board of Higher Education and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts. The goal is to get this ad on college websites and in newspapers throughout the state.

An added component of this project will be to encourage foreign language newspapers to run the ad and encourage the recruitment of young racial and ethnic minorities to serve as poll workers in their communities.

The elections in 2000 and 2004 raised consciousness about the people on the front lines of democracy – the poll workers. Poll workers are integral to our elections. They face chal-

lenges assisting new citizens, those who cannot speak or write English, people with disabilities, the young, and the elderly. They deal with voters who forget their ID or don't live in the precinct, long lines, electronic equipment, and accuracy and security issues. They must be able to accurately and clearly explain complex voting rules and technologies to voters.



According to an MIT/Caltech study, Massachusetts must recruit more than 12,000 workers for each statewide election. There are shortages of poll workers in large cities. Poll workers provide an invaluable public service by facilitating our elections and thus strengthening our democracy. It is essential that they reflect the diversity of the community.

Next Generation Makes a Difference: Interns at the League

■ by Robin Rich
Assistant Executive Director

For the fourth year, the state League welcomed college students to intern at the League office during summer months. College interns are a wonderful addition to the League office. Their enthusiasm and interest in government, elections, and public policy reinforce our own commitment to citizen participation and the value of the projects the League undertakes.

Mariel Dela Cruz and Kim Geronimo, from Wellesley College, worked as fulltime interns this summer. They were selected from a large pool of extremely qualified college students.

The interns worked on projects requiring extensive research and writing and worked on the final lobbying push for the League's Empowering Voter Project legislation. The interns updated the League's *Directory of Civic Engagement and Leadership Development*

Programs for Massachusetts Youth to insure the information remains complete and accurate. Each intern was also responsible for a special project.

Kim Geronimo prepared Election 2006 information on ballot questions and the races for the League's election website, www.votinginfo.info. She also developed a PowerPoint presentation on ballot questions that will be available to local Leagues and other organizations this fall to inform voters about their choices in November.

Sharing her thoughts about her League internship experience this summer, Kim Geronimo said, "I've learned a lot about direct democracy and the possibility that a common citizen can actually create a law [through the initiative petition process]. It's also been interesting to participate in lobbying, and I have gotten a taste of what it is really like to push a bill through the legislature."

Mariel Dela Cruz spent extensive amount of time working on researching fiscal policy issues to assist the Fiscal Policy Study Committee as they prepare for the new study. What impressed Mariel Dela Cruz the most was the dedication and interest of League members in studying public policy issues.

"My work with the League allowed me to understand the value of participatory politics. I was amazed at the commitment of the League and its members to the issues they care about and the amount of work they are willing to put in for these causes to move forward," she said. Mariel also worked on the League's campaign to recruit poll workers among 18-24 year olds.

The League and the students benefited a great deal from these internships. In a continuing effort to engage the next generation in the political and electoral processes, the League is now recruiting interns for the fall and spring semesters.



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September 2006

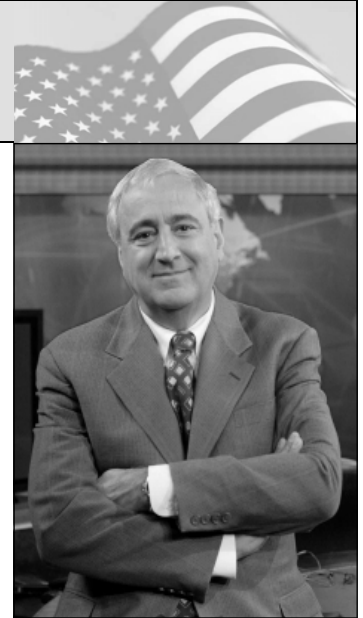
2006 Inaugural Guardian of Democracy Award Dinner

The Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel
Thursday, September 21, 2006
Reception 6:30 p.m. / Dinner 7:30 p.m.

Honoring
Paul La Camera
General Manager
The WBUR Group

Keynote Speaker
The Honorable Michael Dukakis
Former Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Tickets: \$150 (One-half of ticket price is tax-deductible) | Sponsorship opportunities available.
To purchase tickets, visit www.lwvma.org or use the form on page 12.



Paul La Camera
General Manager

LWVM Citizen Ed Fund To Honor Paul La Camera with Guardian of Democracy Award September 21

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voter turnout, diminishing political coverage in the news, etc., it is important to honor and encourage those citizens who have dedicated their lives to preserving and strengthening our democracy. As the foremost protectors of democracy, the League is the ideal organization to recognize and honor such accomplishments.

The Guardian of Democracy Award was established to honor unique individuals who have made a significant contribution to the active and informed participation of citizens in their government, and who have demonstrated a commitment to democracy and democratic processes.

Through his remarkable leadership at WBUR and WCVB-TV, La Camera has shown a true commitment to making sure that citizens are well-informed and active in their government. WBUR has earned a reputation as one of the

nation's premier National Public Radio affiliates by reporting in depth on even the most complicated of issues. Under La Camera's leadership, the station carries on its long tradition of helping people better understand the issues affecting their lives and assisting them in making informed decisions.

Its five-part series, "Boston at the Crossroads," examined the forces shaping Boston's future, taking a critical look at the city's economic roots, the significant changes that have shaped the city and the challenges and opportunities facing Greater Boston. A follow-up call-in program gave Boston-area residents the chance to take part in charting the city's future, and, to supplement the series, an associated website featured a wealth of additional information in a variety of media formats.

In addition to his work at WBUR:

- Under his leadership, WCVB maintained wide-ranging coverage of political campaigns and public policy issues despite heavy commercial pressure.
- WCVB also introduced the groundbreak-

ing practice of bilingual broadcasts, helping to ensure that information and news were accessible to the Spanish-speaking community.

- It was the first station in the country to pledge five minutes of candidate discourse each night in the 30 days leading up to elections.

To read more about his accomplishments, visit the League's website, www.lwvma.org.

This is an extraordinary opportunity for League members and friends to honor an outstanding individual and affirm the League's commitment to a secure an inclusive democracy. Please join us at this special event.

The Guardian of Democracy Award Dinner, September 21, will begin with a reception at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m.

The ticket price is \$150 (half of the ticket price is tax-deductible). To purchase tickets contact the LWVM office at 617-523-2999 or lwvma@lwvma.org. You can also purchase tickets online at www.lwvma.org or by using the form on page 12 of this *Voter*.



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September 2006

STATE LEAGUE STUDY Fiscal Policy Update Committee, Year One

■ by Kathy Leonardson and Zaxaro Bennett
Fiscal Policy Update Committee Co-Chairs

An update/restudy of the Massachusetts League's Fiscal Policy positions was adopted at the May 2005 biennial Convention, to begin in May 2006. The impetus for the study came from the fiscal struggles that many Massachusetts municipalities have faced since the economic downturn of 2002, which resulted in deep cuts in state aid to the Commonwealth's cities and towns. The Fiscal Policy Update Committee has been meeting since May 2005 for "pre-study" working sessions to learn about the myriad topics that affect both local revenues and expenses.

Goals of the Update Committee

The main goal of the committee is to evaluate how state government policies affect the fiscal situation in Massachusetts cities and towns. Because the committee is revisiting many of the topics of previous Fiscal Policy studies, it is referred to as an "update or restudy" group. It could turn out that current League positions are sufficient and would support any proposed actions.

An additional possible objective may be to propose an amendment to the LWVM Fiscal Policy goal statement to include the effect on local government as part of the criteria for evaluation. Such a proposed change would be brought to the membership through the consensus process in 2007-08.

Upcoming Committee Activities and Local Leagues 2006-07

The Update Committee will design an informational half-day forum exploring how state decisions affect the fiscal situation at the local level to be held in January 2007. The forum will be held in several locations around the state to make it easy for local League members to attend. (See chart for topics.)

Self-study materials for local Leagues to gather information on the fiscal status of their own towns will be sent in February 2007 for locally formed fiscal policy study committees.

Fiscal Policy Update Committee Membership

The committee is currently a large dedicated group of League members from across the state, reflecting the ongoing concern about municipal finances. The committee combines resource people who have expertise in specific areas such as past Fiscal Policy studies and education finance with newcomers to the field.

For additional information, new ideas, to find out if someone from your local League is on the Update Committee, or to join the Update Committee, please contact Kathy Leonardson (kleonardson@lwmva.org), Zaxaro Bennett (zbennett@lwmva.org), or the LWVM office at 617-523-2999 (lwmva@lwmva.org).

State Fiscal Policy and Local Services Forum Topics

State policies that require municipalities to spend money:

- Ed Reform – Chapter 70
- Special Education
- Municipal Employee Health Insurance, pensions

State policies that control how much money can be raised by local government:

- State constitutional history
- Proposition 2½
- Local option taxes
- Automobile excise tax law

State monies that come to municipalities:

- State aid: lottery aid, Chapter 70 and additional assistance
- Other

State charges (assessments) on municipalities:

- MBTA
- County government, etc.



BELOW: Online Student Essay Contest winners pose with LWVM President Madhu Sridhar and keynote speaker The Honorable Nancy Gertner, U.S. District Court Judge.



BELOW: The Boston Children's Chorus opens the Online Student Essay Contest Award Event by singing the National Anthem.



RIGHT: Two members of the Patriots Trail Girl Scouts lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.



7th Annual Online Student Making Democracy W



ABOVE: The Honorable Judge Gertner enjoys one student's essay. Her keynote speech at the event addressed the importance of the Bill of Rights today.



ABOVE: The Honorable Judge Gertner addresses a question posed by third place winner for the 9-12th grade group Kristin Chan .



BELOW: The Honorable Judge Gertner meets with Laurinda Ralph after Ralph read her essay. Ralph won first place in the 4-5th grade group.



BELOW: LWVM Office Administrator Lindsay Brackett and LWVM Director Pat Costello greet attendees to the Award Event.



Essay Contest Award Event Topic: Our Bill of Rights



LEFT: The Honorable Judge Gertner and Sridhar share a laugh at the Award Event after Gertner's speech.



ABOVE: Artur Wysoczanski reads his winning essay to the audience from the historic Faneuil Hall podium. Wysoczanski tied for second place in the 6-8th grade group.



ABOVE: The Honorable Judge Gertner takes a moment to congratulate the honorable mention winners of the Essay Contest that attended the Award Event at Faneuil Hall.



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Spotlight on Local Leagues

The **Beverly** League organized a "Dialogue on Beverly Middle School," featuring a panel discussion with the mayor, the superintendent, the school committee chair, the middle school principal and a citizen representative. Topics discussed included a retrospective on the first year, curriculum, team teaching, the building, future priorities and financing.

The **Boston** League sponsored a forum on May 1 called "The Scales of Justice: Are They Balanced?" The panelists included Rudolph Kass – Justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court – Retired; Edward Leibensperger, Esq. – President of the Boston Bar Association; John Reinstein – Legal Director ACLUM; Jerry Stuart – Second District Attorney for Suffolk County and Patti Muldoon – LWVM. The panel engendered a provocative and lively discussion of the state of justice in Massachusetts. The forum was funded by the grants awarded by the Program on Constitutional and Legal Policy of the Open Society Institute and the LWVUS.

The **Martha's Vineyard** League presented "The Billie Holiday Story as told and sung by Jerri Wells" in June, followed by a reception for Ms. Wells, a former League member.

The **Newton** League held its Fifth Champagne and Chocolate Reception. The guest speaker at this fundraising event was Dr. Arnold Offner, the Cornelia F. Hugel Professor of History at Lafayette College, and past President of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.

The **Northampton Area** League held a meeting in March with the Registrars of Voters from Northampton, Easthampton and Williamsburg and the Northampton City Clerk to discuss the state League's Empowering Voters Project.

LWVUS Convention "Meeting in the Middle" Held in June 2006

■ by Diane Jeffery
Vice President, Membership & Training

"Meeting in the Middle," The LWVUS 2006 Convention in Minneapolis Minnesota was informative and energizing. Meeting and networking with fellow League members from across the country proved to be very helpful in the sharing of ideas and information.

The Minneapolis news heralded our arrival by stating that the "wonder women" were in town. It was a jam-packed Convention, with enough LWVUS business, caucuses and seminars to keep one going from morning until late in the evening.

We were informed and enlightened by the panel discussion "Merit Selection? Elections? Appointments?: Understanding the System to Defend the Courts" that emphasized how vital a strong third branch of government is, with remarks by Dr. Thomas Mann of The Brook-

ings Institution. We were also entertained by an enthusiastic banquet address by author and radio host Garrison Keillor. Many Massachusetts delegates also gathered together at a reception sponsored by LWVM and attended by outgoing LWVUS President, Kay Maxwell. On the business end, we elected a new President, Mary G. Wilson, as well as a slate of officers and directors. We passed the LWVUS budget for the next two years, including an increase of the LWVUS per-member-payment from \$23 to \$26.30 for fiscal year 2006-2007 and to \$26.80 for FY 2007-2008.

We selected immigration issues as the main LWVUS study for the next two years, amended the LWVUS position on voting to require some type of a voter verified paper trail, and the LWVUS position to support the abolition of the death penalty as well as reaffirming the LWVUS program in the areas of government, international relations, natural resources, and social policy.

Caucuses were held on health care as a priority initiative, the voter verified paper trail initiative, abolition of the death penalty initiative (which LWVM officially supported), the redistricting reform initiative, and the judicial reform initiative, global warming and telecommunications, among others.

A variety of seminars were conducted on the above-mentioned topics. In addition, there were seminars on openness in government, redistricting reform, civil liberties, growing the League, one for Young League Leaders (I was very pleased to be invited to, and attend the session for young league leaders at the ripe age of 43!), New League Presidents, fundraising initiatives, technology tools offered to local Leagues by LWVUS, as well as others. LWVUS Convention was, as always, a very valuable and rewarding experience. We are certainly a one of a kind organization whose members embody the true meaning of volunteerism and democracy in action!



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League's Legislative Update

ELECTION REFORM

Specialist: Cathy Dowd, Vice President, Program & Action

"A Legislative Amendment to the Constitution to Authorize the General Court to Provide for Absentee Voting by Any Voter,"

S.2034

Summary

- Allows unconditional absentee voting by any voter in the Commonwealth

Status

- Passed at Constitutional Convention. To be enacted, must pass Constitutional Convention in next legislative session, and then must go before voters as a referendum.

"Strengthening voting rights and confidence in the Commonwealth," S.2277

Summary

- Expands pool of potential poll workers; provides for a voters' bill of rights to be displayed at polling places; ensures continuing impartiality of elections administrators

Status

- Passed by the Senate and in amended version by House. Senate did not concur in House amendments. Awaiting action by House.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Specialist: Patti Muldoon

"A Resolution Affirming the Civil Rights and Liberties of the People of Massachusetts,"

H.1881

Summary

- Calls for Congress not to expand the

Patriot Act. Affirms the need to work to preserve the greatest degree of civil liberty in the fight against terrorism.

Status

- Adopted as a Resolution by the Senate

EQUAL RIGHTS/REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

Specialist: Betsy Dunn

"An Act to Provide Timely Access to Emergency Contraception," S.2073

Summary

- Authorizes pharmacists to dispense emergency contraception and requires emergency contraception to be offered by hospitals to rape victims.

Status

- Passed over Governor's veto

"An Act to Provide for Equitable Coverage in Annuities," H.2970, S.619

Summary

- Requires the state-regulated annuities sold to MA residents be gender-neutral in all the terms and conditions of the contract, including premiums and benefits.

Status

- Passed to be engrossed by the House; awaiting Senate action.

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Specialist: Clare Gordon

"An Act Relative to Welfare Reform," H.4378

Summary

- Aligns MA welfare standards with federal policy as enacted in 2006

Status

- Passed by both houses 7/20/06. Returned

by the Governor with amendments

7/28/06. Most of the amendments were rejected by both houses on 7/31/06, but action to pass the new bill (H.5249) was not completed. It is unclear whether it will be taken up before 2007.

HEALTH CARE

Specialist: Judy Deutsch

"An Act Ensuring Patient Safety," H.2663, as amended H.4988

Summary

- Establishes minimum nursing staffing levels and restricts forced overtime

Status

- Passed overwhelmingly in the House, left in committee by Senate (Senate Ethics and Rules)

"An Act to Establish a Personal Care Attendant Quality Home Care Workforce Council," H.4758

Summary

- Creates a council to develop a registry of home care workers

Status

- Passed over Governor's veto

NATURAL RESOURCES

Specialist: Lynn Wolbarst

"An Act Relative to Mercury Management," H.5112

Summary

- Restricts the sale and disposal of mercury-containing products

Status

- Signed by Governor 7/28/06

League-Supported Gender Neutral Insurance Bill Passes in House

■ by Betsy Dunn

Specialist, Equal Rights/Reproductive Choice

"An Act Relative to Equitable Coverage for Annuity Policies" (H.2970) would lift the retirement income of women by about 10% by equalizing their annuity payments with those of men. This is still a radical idea even 30 years after passage of our state ERA.

The last two weeks of the legislative session was a no-holds-barred struggle between the proponents of the bill and the insurance indus-

try, which opposes it, with intense interest all over the State House.

Just two weeks before adjournment, on July 31, House Ways & Means finally gave H.2970 a favorable report and both sides swung into action. Representative Ruth Balsler, the lead sponsor in the House, was superb at coordinating, advocating, nudging (her words) and leading an eloquent debate before an almost 3 to 1 winning vote margin (116 to 40), but with just two days left for the Senate to act.

The Senate had passed H.2970 in two prior legislative sessions. With the original sponsor, Senator Therese Murray, in the Senate leadership, there was good reason to expect expedited passage.

In spite of pressure from Senator Murray and many colleagues, the bill did not get floor consideration. As one sympathetic court officer said at midnight, "Like the Red Sox, 'wait 'till next year.'"



2006 ELECTIONS INFORMATION

Dates & Deadlines, Offices for Election, and Ballot Questions

ELECTION DATES AND DEADLINES FOR 2006

- **State Primary Elections:** Tuesday, September 19, 2006
- **State Election:** Tuesday, November 7, 2006
- **Deadline to Register for State Election:** Postmarked by October 18, 2006

OFFICES ON THE BALLOT FOR 2006

Federal Offices

- United States Senator
- United States Representative

State Offices

- Governor
- Lieutenant Governor
- Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Attorney General
- Treasurer and Receiver General
- Auditor
- Governor's Council (all 8 districts)
- State Senator (all 40 districts)
- State Representative (all 160 districts)

County Offices

- County Commissioner or Franklin Council of Government Committee (except Berkshire, Essex, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex, Nantucket, Suffolk, Worcester)
- District Attorney
- Clerk of Courts
- Register of Deeds

STATEWIDE BALLOT QUESTIONS FOR 2006

Question 1: To Increase Consumer Convenience and Choice by Permitting Food Stores to Sell Wine

This proposed law would allow local licensing authorities to issue special licenses for food stores to sell wine. There would be a limited number of licenses that could be distributed to food stores, but these licenses would not be counted when applying the laws that limit the number of other kinds of alcoholic beverage licenses that may be issued or held.

What Your Vote Means

A **YES** vote means: you support allowing a regulated number of food stores to sell wine, with conditions on who may obtain such a license, and without reducing the number or other kinds of alcoholic beverage licenses that may be issued.

A **NO** vote means: you do not support allowing wine to be sold in any food stores

Question 2: To Provide Voters with More Ballot Choices

This proposed law would allow candidates for public office to be nominated by more than one political party or political designation. The candidate's names would appear on the ballot once for each nomination.

Their votes would be counted separately for each nomination but then added together to determine the winner of the election.

The proposed law would **repeal** the existing requirement that in order to appear on the state primary ballot as a political party's nominated candidate for certain offices, a person:

- must have been enrolled in that party for 90 days before the deadline for filing nomination papers and
- cannot have been enrolled in any other party during the preceding year.

The proposed law would also **repeal** the existing requirement that in order to be nominated to appear as an unenrolled candidate on the state election ballot, or on any city or town ballot following a primary, a person cannot have been enrolled in any political party during the 90 days before the deadline for filing nomination papers.

nation papers.

What Your Vote Means

A **YES** vote means that you support allowing candidates to be nominated by more than one political party or for more than one political designation and to have that candidate's name appear on the ballot separately for each nomination. You reject the current laws that place limitations on the eligibility of a candidate to represent a political party or to be unenrolled based on his or her previous political affiliations.

A **NO** vote means that you support the current law where candidates can only be nominated by one political party or by one political designation and their names only appear once on the ballot. You also uphold the current limitations on the eligibility of a candidate to represent a political party or to be unenrolled based on his or her previous political affiliations.

Question 3: To Allow Family Child Care Providers to Unionize

This proposed law would allow licensed and other authorized providers of child care in private homes under the state's subsidized child care system to bargain collectively with the relevant state agencies about all terms and conditions of the provision of child care services under the state's child care assistance program and its regulations.

What Your Vote Means

A **YES** vote means that you support allowing authorized providers of child care to be unionized under one representative to bargain with state agencies about the terms of child care services.

A **NO** vote means that you do not support allowing authorized providers of child care to unite to bargain with state agencies about the terms of the child care services.

For More Information

Visit the League's nonpartisan, comprehensive voting and elections information site: www.votinginfo.info
OR
Call the League's Voter Information Phone: **800-882-1649**



EVP Victory on Absentee Voting and Progress on Voting Rights and Confidence Bill *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

toral process by:

- Eliminating the restrictive conditions under which people can vote by absentee ballot, (currently only if disabled, prevented by religious reasons, or out-of-town on Election Day)
- Recognizing that the demands of modern life – caring for young children or older dependents, urgent business travel and unavoidable personal issues – often discourage and/or prohibit voters from casting their ballots on the day of an election.

Unconditional absentee voting has a proven track record in 24 other states, blue and red, urban and rural, large and small: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming. Research done among these states indicates that:

- Voters greatly appreciated the flexibility it afforded them
- Administrative processes changes were manageable
- No fraud was reported as a result of the change

“Strengthening Voting Rights and Confidence” (S.2277) was passed by the Senate as drafted by the League, and by the House with amendments. These differences must be resolved before the bill can move to the Governor for his signature. Although the legislature has completed its formal sessions for the term,

we are hopeful that the bill can move forward during informal session. The bill will improve practices in three areas of election laws by:

- **Providing a Voters’ Bill of Rights** - The legislation requires that the Secretary of the Commonwealth provide a Voters’ Bill of Rights at every polling place, on the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s website, and in appropriate publications of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Voters must know their rights in order to protect their rights.
- **Expanding the Pool of Election Officers** - The legislation enables cities and towns to hire poll workers who live in another Massachusetts city or town, and it enables people ages 16 and 17 to serve as poll workers, provided they satisfy certain requirements.
- **Ensuring the Continuing Impartiality of Administration of Elections** - The legislation prohibits elections officials from serving as campaign chair, co-chair or treasurer, for any campaign other than their own. This will remove perception of bias among those who manage elections.

The reforms enacted by S.2277 address contemporary and pressing concerns involving the electoral process.

- Currently six states (California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Minnesota and Nevada) have laws requiring the posting of a Voters’ Bill of Rights in every polling place.
- In the 2004 election, the Voters’ Bill of Rights, drafted by the League and signed by Governor Romney and Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin, and adopted as a Resolution, “Recognizing the Massachusetts Voters’

Bill of Rights,” by the legislature, was voluntarily distributed by Secretary of the Commonwealth Galvin.

- The National Council of State Legislatures Elections Reform Task Force reports that 17 states, including Massachusetts, require that poll workers be registered in the community where they work.
- At least 31 states allow students ages 16 and 17 to serve as poll workers if they meet certain criteria. According to the Elections Assistance Commission, the average age of a poll worker today is 72.
- Elections officials in states across the nation have faced allegations of election fraud and a perception of impropriety. Some of these allegations concern excessive involvement in political campaigns.
- In 2001, Georgia passed a law that prevents its Secretary of State from serving on a campaign in any fiduciary capacity. A newly formed federal voting commission is examining problems in Florida, Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri.

“Change is not always easy,” said Sridhar, “but without it we can’t move forward. 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 key to an active and representative democracy is a voting process that makes casting your ballot easy and accessible for all citizens. Easing the restrictions on absentee voting is a key part of our campaign to match our voting processes to our modern lifestyles in the interest of a more active and representative democracy. This legislation represents progress in our efforts to modernize Massachusetts election laws.”



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September 2006
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