

The Bulletin

Westwood/Walpole League of Women Voters



Volume 7 issue 3

October 2008



SPECIAL DATES

Changes happen; check emails and Website often.



- ⇒ WALPOLE TOWN MEETING OCTOBER 20, 2008
- ⇒ WESTWOOD SPECIAL TOWN MEETING OCTOBER 21, 2008
- ⇒ GENERAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 4, 20

OCTOBER



Join Greg Agnew for an evening to discuss the ballot questions and to meet Walpole's contested candidates. Ballot Question One is of particular interest to League members as we are mounting a campaign in opposition to eliminating the state income tax. **Walpole** will decide on an override for building a new library. More on MA ballot questions can be found inside this Bulletin and by going to—www.lwvma.org; click on voting information and then on MA ballot information

Date & place still being negotiated. Check your emails & website for more!

NOVEMBER



Join Diane Jeffery, Massachusetts League president, for a discussion about the League. Learn about what is "hot" with the state league currently. Come! Learn many other interesting facts about your League. Bring a friend. This will be a great meeting to introduce someone to League and why it is a great organization.

Date: November 11 Time: 7:30p.m. Place: Watch emails and Website for more.

DECEMBER



Meet, great, socialize with fellow league members, friends, and legislators at our annual holiday gathering. This is one of our most popular events. But while enjoying the evening, we also remember the women and children subjected to abuse by contributing to the Dana DeVanna Center. Each year we give our contributions in memory of Joanne Carey who started our association with this wonderful organization.

Date: Will depend on Place Time:6:30p.m. Place: Watch emails & website for more

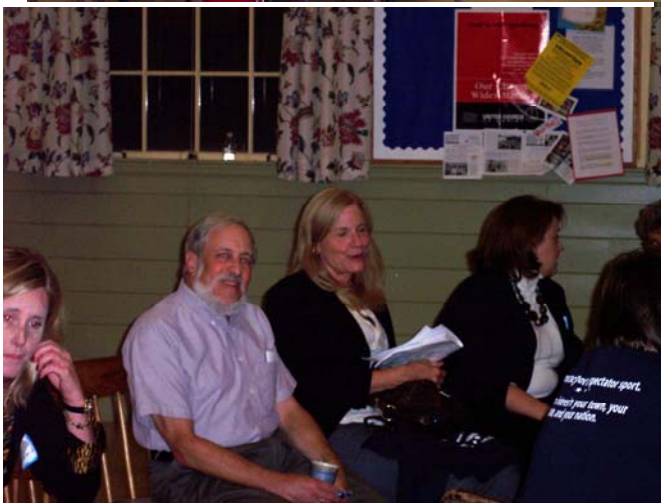
Check upcoming bulletins and our website at [www.lwvwestwoodwalpole](http://www.lwvwestwoodwalpole.org) for more information on this & other events

Happy Halloween



The Bulletin is published ten times a year, September-June, by the Westwood-Walpole League of Women Voters. Visit the **Westwood/Walpole lwv** at www.lwvwestwoodwalpole.org, **LWVM** home page at www.lwvma.org and the **LWVUS** home page at www.lwv.org

LWV Rx for Health Care Meeting Recap



LWV Rx for Health Care Meeting Recap

Kicking off their 2008-09 season at the First Parish of Westwood United, the Westwood-Walpole League of Women Voters provided an informative discussion about health care coverage and costs in Massachusetts, entitled “Is There an Rx for Health Care?” Panelists included Dr. John Chessare, President of Caritas Norwood Hospital; Melissa Shannon, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Massachusetts Office of Medicaid; and Jennifer Chow, Grantmaking Program Manager at the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. Greg Agnew, LWV At-Large Board Member moderated the discussion.

Ms. Shannon presented a broad overview of the state’s landmark health insurance reform initiative that is serving as a role model for other states’ efforts. The goal of the 2006 law is to bring near universal coverage to residents by imposing new responsibilities on individuals, employees, and the Commonwealth. Ms. Chow provided the consumer’s perspective, sharing ways that the foundation and private agencies like “Health Care For All” work to increase access and reduce barriers to care.

Dr. Chessare addressed the issue of rising health care costs from the local hospital perspective. As one example, he explained that because Norwood Hospital was not a “name brand” hospital, their insurance reimbursement costs for the same procedure, with the same level of medical care and results, were 20% less than at a bigger-name hospital. If hospitals were reimbursed equally, he theorized, then health care costs would decrease.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

Alisa Shapiro

DUES ARE DUE



**DO NOT GET DROPPED FROM THE MEMBERSHIP
OUR LEAGUE NEEDS AND WANTS YOU
PAY YOUR DUES NOW!!
DUES WERE DUE IN JUNE! MEMBERS HAVE UNTIL OCTOBER 31 TO PAY BEFORE
THEY ARE DROPPED FROM WESTWOOD-WALPOLE MEMBERSHIP**

**Make Checks payable to LWV;
Mail to: P.O. Box 294, Westwood, MA 02090**

DUES

• Renewal Student	\$25
• Renewal Single	\$50
• Renewal Single supporting	\$60
• *Renewal Family	\$75
• *Renewal Family supporting	\$85
• *All members must reside at <u>same address</u>	

**Great news!! We are at 91 members reaching for 100
Look forward to the November Bulletin when Marcia will have a
special section welcoming all our new members.**



Remember we lobby!

Members make us strong.

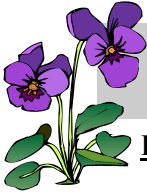
Members make us heard!

YOU can help reach our goal of 100 members. You can—

- ✓ Send Marcia names of potential members
- ✓ Spread the word about this great organization
- ✓ Encourage people to join
- ✓ Come to meetings and bring friends and family

REPORTS

Remembering



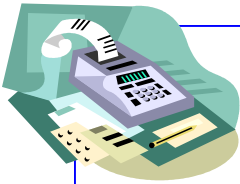
Harvey Fischler

Melissa Hed’s father, Harvey Fischler, died on Thursday, September 25. He was 66 years old. Services were held at Temple Beth David on Friday September 26th. In lieu of flowers those who wish to express sympathy in his memory may donate to The Angel Fund, 649 Main Street, Wakefield, MA 01880 or to Brigham & Women's Hospital, Development Office, c/o Shapiro Center, 116 Huntington Ave., 5th floor, Boston, MA 02116 or to Temple Beth David, P.O. Box 459, Westwood, MA 02090.

Michael Bibeault

Michael T. Bibeault, 28, died suddenly in Caritas Norwood Hospital on Sept. 7, 2008. Born in Norwood, he was a graduate of Walpole High School and had been living in Wrentham for the past two years, moving there from Plainville. Mr. Bibeault worked as a carpenter, remodeling homes. He enjoyed fishing and watching the Red Sox and Patriots. He was the son of Fred and Penny Bibeault of Walpole and brother of Fred Bibeault of Marshfield. He is also survived by several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Treasurer’s Report



Westwood/Walpole League of Women Voters Reconciliation Statement September 1-30, 2008

Starting balance		\$8,257.55
Income/Deposits		
Dues	25.00	
T shirts	56.00	
Interest	1.05	
Total assets		\$8,339.60
Expenses		
K. Zola – Web host fee	61.60	
Printworks - WW KYT booklets	890.00	
Printworks – Misc. c/c printing	5.00	
Newspapers in Education – Sponsorships – Civics Ed.	750.00	
Total Expenses		\$1,706.60
Current Balance		\$6,633.00

Ballot Questions Vote No Question 1

A PROPOSED LAW TO ELIMINATE THE STATE INCOME TAX

Summary:

This proposed law would eliminate the state personal income tax for all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2009. The personal income tax applies to income received or gain realized by individuals and married couples, by estates of deceased persons, by certain trustees and other fiduciaries, by persons who are partners in and receive income from partnerships, by corporate trusts, and by persons who receive income as shareholders of "S corporations" as defined under federal tax law. The proposed law would not affect the tax due on income or gain realized in a tax year beginning before January 1, 2009. The proposed law states that if any of its parts were declared invalid, the other parts would stay in effect.

The Petitioner's Argument: Committee for Small Government Website: <http://www.smallgovernmentact.org>
Tax payers would save money.

Seven states have no income tax. Tennessee and New Hampshire tax only dividend and interest income.

The government budget would be reduced.

State spending would be curbed, creating a budget similar to that of 1995, subsequently forcing the state legislature to streamline and cut the waste out of the Massachusetts state budget.

It will take \$11 Billion out of the hands of Massachusetts Big Government – and put it back into the hands of the people. This \$ 11 billion will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs in Massachusetts.

This will force the state legislature to get rid of the failed, flawed government programs that don't work.

LWVMA Arguments Against the Proposal:

If the income tax were to be eliminated, this would result in more than \$12 billion being removed from the state's tax base, more than a third of the state's \$27 billion budget.

There would be \$12 billion less in state funding for public works projects such as construction (roads/highways), public safety, school budgets, and many other state services (including Medicaid).

If state funding is cut to programs such as Medicaid, then the federal funding will also be eliminated to these programs.

If this tax were to be eliminated, this could lead to lawsuits against the states if they could not fulfill government mandates (as a result of the money shortfall).

Local communities may have to raise property taxes significantly to maintain local services. For example, the state provides 40% of the total K-12 education funding in Massachusetts. This would probably be lowered if the tax was eliminated.

Municipal Governments would see more overrides and the state would raise fees and the sales tax.

Business and Corporate taxes are so low that a reduced tax would create higher profits but not necessarily more investment.

League Stance:

From "League of Women Voters of the United States 2006-2008 Impact on Issues" Book

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that federal fiscal policy should provide for: adequate and flexible funding through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax. . ."

LWVMA policy of opposition to draconian tax and expenditure limits which are inflexible, are borne unduly by the poor, discourage good fiscal planning and - a very important argument- cause detrimental changes in the balance of power between state and local government. June Michaels – Fiscal Policy Specialist, Coalition to Fight Income Tax Initiative, 978-546-3863, email macluj@comcast.net

Resources

<http://unionreview.com/carpenters-fight-elimination-income-tax>

<http://www.wvlp.com/global/story.asp?s=8518448>

http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2008/05/12/activists_push_to_repeal_state_income_tax/?page=2

<http://friendsofatr.blogspot.com/2008/05/income-tax-repeal-presses-forward-in.html>

<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/x192204858/Income-tax-cut-unlikely-says-DiMasi>

<http://www.massbudget.org/question1.html>

<http://www.smallgovernmentact.org/nat-051508.html>

http://www.pvpc.org/pressreleases/2008/pr-may-22-08_pfp_tax.shtml

<http://www.govspot.com/know/incometax.htm>

<http://smallgovernmentact.org/index.html>



VOTER SERVICE—Ballot Information

Massachusetts Ballot Questions: Election 2008

QUESTION 1: ABOLISH STATE INCOME TAX (5.3% flat tax)

Although this would put \$3,700 (on average) directly into the bank accounts of the average taxpayer each year, it would wipe out 40% of the state budget and take with it a whole host of social services that we've come to enjoy over the past few decades. *

QUESTION 2: DECRIMINALIZE MARIJUANA POSSESSION

This would replace criminal penalties for possession of one ounce or less of the drug with civil penalties, making it comparable to a parking ticket.

QUESTION 3: BAN GREYHOUND RACING

Would place a permanent ban on greyhound racing in Massachusetts. This has been tried twice before and was defeated both times.

* League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Position on Question #1

LWVMA is a member organization of the Coalition for Our Communities in opposition to Question #1 Ballot Initiative to repeal the state income tax.

LWVMA Fiscal Policy Specialist, June Michaels, is working with the Coalition on a VOTE NO on QUESTION 1 campaign. The income tax question on the ballot this fall is a reckless proposal that will have severe and immediate consequences for everyone in the state. The binding referendum will take \$12.7 billion –nearly 40 percent- out of the state budget, driving up local property taxes and leading to drastic cuts in services.

For more information visit www.VoteNoMA.com

Be sure and access <http://votenoquestion1.com/> for more information.

SAVE THIS DATE

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Citizen

Education Fund

FALL CONFERENCE 2008

Finding the Common Wealth

Saturday, October 18, 2008

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

(Registration begins at 8:15 a.m.)

Featured Speaker



Lt. Governor Tim Murray

Fall Conference 2008 Workshops.

Ballot Question 1

Costs of eliminating the State income tax.

What are the severe and immediate consequences of this proposal?

Healthcare For All

Housing and Homelessness Initiative

Consensus Recorder and Discussion Leader Training

Effective League Lobbying

League Moderator Training.

Look for registration information in the upcoming

Massachusetts Voter.

For more information, please contact the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts.

Phone: 617-523-2999 | Fax: 617-248-0881 | Email: lwwma@lwwma.org



Domestic Violence the Silent Family Tragedy That Affects Us ALL!!

October is Domestic Violence Month Some Facts on Domestic Violence

- Estimates range from 960,000 incidents of violence against a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend per year¹ to three million women who are physically abused by their husband or boyfriend per year.
- Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime.
- Nearly one-third of American women (31 percent) report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or boyfriend at some point in their lives, according to a 1998 Commonwealth Fund survey.
- Nearly 25 percent of American women report being raped and/or physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time in their lifetime, according to the National Violence Against Women Survey, conducted from November 1995 to May 1996.
- Thirty percent of Americans say they know a woman who has been physically abused by her husband or boyfriend in the past year.
- In the year 2001, more than half a million American women (588,490 women) were victims of nonfatal violence committed by an intimate partner.
- Intimate partner violence is primarily a crime against women. In 2001, women accounted for 85 percent of the victims of intimate partner violence (588,490 total) and men accounted for approximately 15 percent of the victims (103,220 total).
- While women are less likely than men to be victims of violent crimes overall, women are five to eight times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner.
- In 2001, intimate partner violence made up 20 percent of violent crime against women. The same year, intimate partners committed three percent of all violent crime against men.
- Women of all races are about equally vulnerable to violence by an intimate.
- Male violence against women does much more damage than female violence against men; women are much more likely to be injured than men.
- The most rapid growth in domestic relations caseloads is occurring in domestic violence filings. Between 1993 and 1995, 18 of 32 states with three year filing figures reported an increase of 20 percent or more.
- Women are seven to 14 times more likely than men to report suffering severe physical assaults from an intimate partner.
- The health-related costs of rape, physical assault, stalking, and homicide by intimate partners exceed \$5.8 billion dollars each year (CDC study).

Domestic Homicides:

- On average, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in this country every day. In 2000, 1,247 women were killed by an intimate partner. The same year 440 men were killed by an intimate partner.
- Women are much more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner. In 2000, intimate partner homicides accounted for 33.5 percent of the murders of women and less than four percent of the murders of men.

Some Health Issues:

- About half of all female victims of intimate violence report an injury of some type, and about 20 percent of them seek medical assistance.
- Thirty-seven percent of women who sought treatment in emergency rooms for violence-related injuries in 1994 were injured by a current or former spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend.

PROPOSED CALENDAR



LWVUS initiates two reviews of old positions

LWVUS National Popular Vote Compact (NPV) Discussion List Available (NEW)

The LWVUS NPV discussion list, open to all League members, allows participants to share information about resources, ways to effectively educate League members on the NPV Compact, the consensus process and ideas about preparing for and holding consensus meetings. The discussion list is NOT a venue for debating NPV issues. Each League should have at least one member on the NPV discussion list to share ideas and/or ask questions about the study/consensus process.

[Click here](#) for the NPV Study section at www.lwv.org to subscribe to the discussion list or [click here](#) to login.

LWVUS Health Care Education Task Force

The LWVUS is pleased to announce the formation of a seven-member Health Care Education Task Force. Twenty-seven well-qualified League members applied and we very much appreciated the broad interest and passion for health care exemplified by our members nationwide. The Task Force members are Olin Bray (NM), Sue Bredensteiner (TN), Robin Lane (NC), Susan Leinberger (PA), Doris Nelson (CA) and Rhonda Tewes (MA). LWVUS/EF Director Janis McMillen is chair of the Task Force, whose purpose is to design a program for educating our members about health care.

October

- 11 Voter service registration & information
- ⇒ LWVM Phonathon-
Check website at www.lwvwestwoodwalpole.org for up to date information
- ⇒ Local Program: *Understanding the State Ballot*
Check website at www.westwoodwalpole.org for Date, Time, Place
- 18 Fall Conference, Worcester Crowne Plaza 9:00am
- 20 Walpole Town Meeting
- 21 Westwood Special Town Meeting

November

- 03 Steering committee meeting (all members are invited to attend; call 781-326-8784)
- 04 Presidential and State elections
- 11 Meet with Diane Jeffrey, LWVM president. (Check website for more information)

December

- ⇒ Annual Holiday Party with Legislators/Collection for the DeVanna Domestic Violence Action (Check November Bulletin, emails and website for more information)