

**League of Women Voters
Bedford, Massachusetts**

Membership Guide

2008-2009

Visit our new website!

www.bedford.ma.lwvnet.org

The Bedford League of Women Voters' website is up and running. Learn about the history and mission of the League. Find information about the Bedford League, and local news. The Bedford LWV Bulletin is posted here. Previous issues are archived and also available for download; no need to worry about misplacing your copy. Our goal is to create an easy to use, informative resource for the community. Please send ideas or suggestions, information and news to Mary Johannessen at mjohannessen@gmail.com

Purpose and Policy of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is dedicated to the principles of self-government established in the Constitution of the United States. Its purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League carries out its purpose through its Program and its Voter Service.

Principles of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters believes:

- 1 in the representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States;
- 2 that democratic government depends on the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible;
- 3 that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination between different agencies and levels of government;
- 4 that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people, that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, and share in the solution of international problems;
- 5 that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

General Information - League of Women Voters of Bedford

Annual Meeting:

Held between May 1st and June 30th. All members invited to attend.

Membership:

Voting members shall be citizens at least 18 years of age. Voting members who have been enrolled in the League for at least 50 years shall be Life Members and shall not be required to pay annual dues. Two or more members who reside at the same address in a common household may enroll as a Household Membership. Associate Members shall be all others who enroll in the League. Student Members shall be those of any age enrolled full-time or part-time in an accredited institution.

Dues:

The membership year shall be from July 1st to June 30th. Dues for new members enrolling between February 1st and June 30th in any calendar year shall be at one-half of the annual amount. Any member who fails to pay her/his annual dues prior to January 31st shall be dropped from the membership rolls. Current dues are \$50.00 for an Individual Membership, \$75.00 for a Household Membership, and \$21.00 for a Student Membership.

Bulletin:

Every registered member shall receive the League's local publication issued approximately ten times per year. It is available electronically or by post.

Diversity Policy

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

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

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

2008-2009 Board of Directors

Nominating Committee:

Board: ContactJoan Bowen
 Bulletin Editor Mary Johannessen
 Treasurer John McCulloch

Budget Committee:

Local Program 2008-2009

1. Civics in Bedford
 - Continue with welcome wagon activities for Bedford residents
 - Continue to explore civics curriculum in the Bedford schools
 - Continue expanded warrant review programs in preparation for Bedford Annual Town Meeting
 - Continue exploration of creating a town-wide website
 - Provide informational forums as town issues arise.

2. Help foster connections among residents, citizens groups, and the VA.

3. Monitor town activities related to climate change and other environmental issues.

League Addresses

League of Women Voters of the United States

1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000 202- 429-1965
Washington, DC 20036-4508 202-429-0854 Fax
Website: <http://www.lwv.org>

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

133 Portland Street 617-523-2999
Boston, MA 02114 617-248-0881 Fax
Website: <http://www.lwvma.org>

State Legislators

21st Middlesex Representative District (Bedford, Burlington, 1 precinct of Wilmington)

Charles Murphy Room 466, The State House 617-722-2017
Boston, MA 02133
E-mail address: Rep.CharlesMurphy@hou.state.ma.us

Committees: Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, Joint Committee on the Judiciary (Vice-Chair), Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

5th Middlesex Senatorial District (Bedford, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, part of Lexington, Lincoln, part of Sudbury, part of Waltham, Wayland, Weston)

Susan Fargo Room 504, The State House 617-722-1572
Boston, MA 02133
E-mail Address: Susan.Fargo@state.ma.us

Committees: Public Health (Chair), Post Audit and Oversight (Vice-Chair), Ways and Means, Health Care Financing, Municipalities and Regional Government, State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Federal Legislators

6th Congressional District

John F. Tierney

17 Peabody Square
Peabody, MA 01960

978-531-1669
978-531-1996 Fax

2338 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

202-225-8020
202-225-5915 Fax

Website: <http://www.house.gov/tierney>

United State Senate

Edward M. Kennedy

Room 2400, JFK Building
Boston, MA 02203

617-565-3170
617-565-3183 Fax

Room 317, Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

202-224-4543
202-224-2417 Fax

E-mail address: senator@kennedy.senate.gov

John Kerry

One Bowdoin Square, 10th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

617-565-8519
617-248-3870 Fax

Room 304, Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

202-224-2742
202-224-8525 Fax

E-mail address: JohnKerry@kerry.senate.gov

National Program

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

Election Process

Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance. Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Election of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the Electoral College. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Congress and the Presidency

Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

United Nations

Support a strong, effective United Nations, to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

Trade

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals,

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

Arms Control

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Natural Resources

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

Resource Management

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources. Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management. Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Public Participation

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

Agricultural Policy

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

SOCIAL POLICY

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

Equality of Opportunity

Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment, Housing. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

Fiscal Policy

Tax Policy. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

Federal Deficit. Promote responsible deficit policies.

Funding of Entitlements. Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

Health Care

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Income Assistance. Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

Support Services. Provide for essential support services.

Housing Supply. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

Child Care

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

Gun Control

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

Death Penalty

The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

State Program

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts supports:

Government

County Government and Regional Planning

An effective state government. An intermediate level of government to solve regional problems (either through a revised county structure or an emerging regionalism). Regional planning on a statewide basis. High visibility for county and/or regional government. Home rule for counties.

Courts

A judicial system that provides equal justice for all through effective, modern administration, qualified judicial personnel, a strengthened probation service, and procedures and practices that ensure due process of law.

Executive Branch

An effective state government. A strong executive branch with lines of authority and responsibility clearly defined.

Fiscal Policy

Support of a state and local tax structure that will have an equitable impact on taxpayers and adequately support state services with consideration of the effect on the state's economy. Distribution of state aid in a manner that will equalize municipal resources. A comprehensive state budget system that will provide a basis for the evaluation of the cost and effectiveness of current state programs and long-range capital expenditures. Up-to-date, uniform, and accurate property valuations. Efficient management of the revenue collection systems.

Home Rule

An effective state government. Home rule for Massachusetts's cities and towns in local matters.

Legislature

An effective state government. A strong and highly visible legislative branch that is districted on the basis of population into contiguous, compact, single-member districts by an appointed, bipartisan commission, and that maintains its traditional role as a democratic forum.

Public Personnel

A public personnel system based on merit principles and enlightened practices.

Social Policy

Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment

The prevention of child abuse and neglect. The protection and care of children experiencing abuse and neglect.

Corrections

A sound corrections system for the rehabilitation of the adult and juvenile offender.

Day Care

A coordinated state policy for quality day care for the children of Massachusetts with adequate funding for implementation by the responsible state agencies.

Education

LWVM has acted under the LWVUS position supporting equal access to education. State positions in education address: statewide standards, equal opportunity, fiscal autonomy, school committee/teacher relationships, and higher education.

Handgun Control

Elimination of the private possession of handguns and assault weapons.
shared by all levels of government.

Health Care

An affordable health care system that provides equal access to quality health care for all.

Legalized Casino Gambling

Opposition to the establishment of legalized casino gambling in Massachusetts.

Reproductive Choices

Freedom of individuals to make informed reproductive decisions.

Transportation

A statewide public transportation service, accessible to all, that provides access to jobs, housing, and services while creating minimum disruption of the environment. Public Monies allocated flexibly to meet public transportation needs.

Local Support Positions

1. Support of Flood Plain Zoning

- a. To support responsible land use and property protection by prohibiting filling and construction of homes and potential flood hazard areas.
- b. To provide the marshes which act as water storage areas for our wells and as sponges to absorb flood waters, thereby lessening flood hazards.
- c. To preserve the natural beauty of our rivers and provide wildlife sanctuaries.

2. Land Use Positions

- a. Conservation: Support of wetland zoning in Bedford.
- b. Zoning: Recognition of the need for professional planning assistance for the Planning Board.
- c. Transportation:
 - i. Support of the formulation of a comprehensive traffic and public transportation plan for Bedford consistent with regional planning.
 - ii. Support of regional public transportation.

3. Master Plan Positions

- a. Support of measures which will insure the preservation of the town's colonial heritage.
- b. Support the Master Plan's recommendations that the Bedford Common (including the surrounding streets and structures) be developed as a focal point of the town.
- c. Support of measures which will lead to amore attractive and serviceable Great Road.
- d. Support of the existence of a detailed open space and conservation plan and program for the town.

4. Housing Positions

- a. Support of the concept of cluster zoning.
- b. Support of Housing Authority in its goal of building and/or obtaining affordable housing: low and moderate income housing as well as housing for the handicapped, if need is demonstrated.
- c. Support of the Housing Authority in undertaking state and federal rent supplement programs in Bedford.

5. Support of Apartment Zoning

Criteria for evaluation of multi-family proposals:

- a. The drainage and soil structure of the site is adequate for the proposed units and the capability of the present or proposed on-site water and sewage systems in connections with the town public utilities is demonstrated to be adequate.
- b. The proposed access into the site and the existing road system servicing it are adequate in terms of traffic impact.
- c. The accessibility to town services and public transportation is adequate in terms of the proposed buildings and residents.
- d. The town's need for the type of housing proposed is demonstrated.
- e. The cost impact on schools, roads, and public services is likely to be offset by tax income to be forthcoming from the property.
- f. The internal layout of the site in terms of roads, recreational facilities, and open space is adequate for the proposed population.
- g. The impact on the town's wetlands, its open space, and unique topological features is not adverse.
- h. The impact on the immediately surrounding community, in terms of traffic and screening, is not adverse.
- i. The proposed housing contributes to or does not adversely affect the goal of scattered or multi-family housing throughout the town.
- j. The site is recommended by the Master Plan or is a reasonable alternative to the Master Plan recommendation.
- k. The town services would not be overtaxed nor the growth pattern of the town substantially modified by the addition of such units.
- l. The site is a healthful and desirable environment in terms of noise levels, abutting uses, and health and safety factors.

6. Education

- a. Support consideration of educational alternatives in the Bedford school system.
- b. Support programs which fulfill individual student needs.

7. Transportation

- a. Oppose the expansion of Hanscom Field as a major airport.
- b. Support the 1973 level of general aviation activity at Hanscom Field; expansion of this activity deserves further and continued concern.
- c. Support of a clear determination by the town of the appropriate responsible agent for planning and implementing transportation plans for Bedford. Support of the hiring of a transportation consultant to assist the town in this endeavor.
- d. Support of researching and implementing alternatives to the private automobile in solution of Bedford's traffic problems.
- e. Support of transportation programs responsive to the needs of the elderly.

8. Charter

Continued support of the Bedford Charter with options to support or oppose amendments and/or revisions. (1999)

9. Recreation

Criteria for acquisition and/or development of public recreation facilities and/or sites:

- a. The location is easily accessible.
- b. The impact on the surrounding neighborhood is not adverse.
- c. The proposal fulfills a documented need of a large percentage of the community.
- d. The initial and long-range costs will be reasonable.
- e. The impact on existing recreational facilities works to the benefit of the town.
- f. The proposal is in harmony with the total recreational plan of the town.

10. Water

- a. Criteria for evaluating water resources and sources (in order of importance):
 - 1 Long-term reliability of the water source increases the town's self-sufficiency in supplying its own water.
 - 2 The proposed water source increases the town's self-sufficiency in supplying its own water.
 - 3 Costs of development and treatment are reasonable for the volume of the water provided.
 - 4 A diversity of sources is maintained in order to reduce vulnerability.
Committees: Local Issues (Chair), Post Audit and Oversight (Vice-Chair), State Administration (Vice-Chair), Health Care, Natural Resources and Agriculture, Science and Technology, Ways and Means, Human Services and Elderly Affairs.
 - 5 Regional impact is not adverse on the ecology or on surrounding towns.)
- b. Support of conservation measures:
 - 1 Zoning by-laws to require new construction to install water saving devices.
 - 2 A ban on new sewer connections when necessary to protect the existing water system.

- c. Support measures to protect water quality in Bedford:
 - 1 Monitoring of the water supply for the existence of such contaminants as:
 - Industrial waste,
 - Road salt,
 - Fuel leakage,
 - Chemical spills,
 - Human/animal/agricultural waste,
 - Low level nuclear waste, and
 - As yet unknown pollutants.
 - 2 Support enforcement of water quality standards in Bedford and outlying towns from which Bedford purchases water by:
 - Familiarizing townspeople with the Water Supply Protection Atlas as produced and disseminated by the Department of Environmental Protection for all Massachusetts communities.
 - Supporting measures in Bedford and Massachusetts to control disposal of hazardous household waste.
 - Encourage establishment of purity and quality standards for all bottled water sold in Massachusetts.

11. Social Policy

Support for the provision of quality childcare for the residents of the Town of Bedford.