

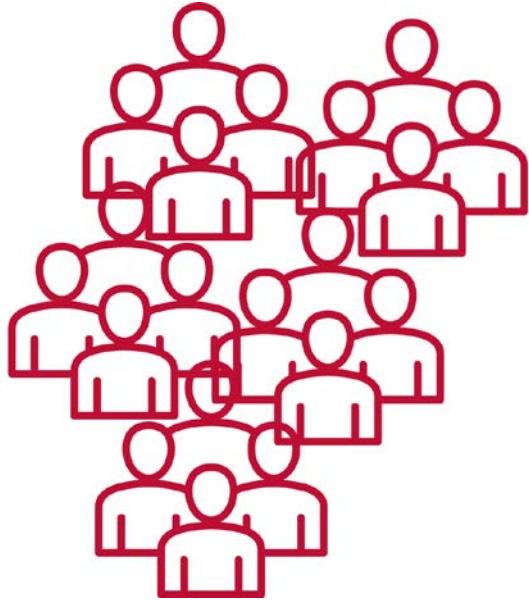
LWVMA Legislative Advocacy Committee and Plymouth LWV



- ▶ What is it?
- ▶ How does it work?
- ▶ How do we fit in?

What is the Legislative Action Committee (LAC)?

▶ A lobbying arm comprised of about twenty LWVMA Area Specialists



- Analyze proposed significant legislation and recommend the LWVMA support/oppose/take no action on these bills.
- For supported bills, develops and manages an advocacy campaign that may include League position and justification, written/oral testimony, written action alerts, and other.

The League partners with many Advocacy Groups to campaign/join forces in supporting legislation, e.g. The Massachusetts Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.

Criteria for Bill Selection

▶ In one session close to 100 bills and many budget requests are endorsed



- Existing League positions and policies
- Degree of impact across the Commonwealth
- Likelihood of passage and degree of support

• In addition, four measures are selected as priority legislation:

Voting ACCESS

Birthing Justice

PFAS (Omnibus)

Prevention of Gun Violence (Omnibus)

My Role as Liaison



Keep the Plymouth League Up to Date

- Updates in the Plymouth LWV Monthly Bulletin
- Educative posts on legislative priorities and other measures.
- Action Alerts on the legislative priorities to call or write your legislators.
- Action alerts on other League supported measures.



Call-to-Action emails

- Action emails with instructions and a call to action.
- This is usually to contact your legislators because of an upcoming vote.



Web updates

- Postings on our Website with education material and/or a call to action.

Call to Action: How to write or call your legislator

► Most calls to action will have a sample script.



- There will be an instruction box on where to find your legislators phone # and email. Contact each legislator individually.
- Follow the script. It is short and clearly states what measure you support including the bill #.

You can personalize these requests by stating why it is important to you (in one to two sentences). Give your name, your address, and that you are a member of the League of Women Voters of the Plymouth Area.

It is okay to leave all this in a phone message.

Lobby Day: A Major Advocacy Event

- An annual meeting for all LWVMA members held at the Statehouse.
- A major show of voting and advocacy power of the League to policymakers.



- A legislator in leadership will give the keynote speech. It is their opportunity to thank the League for support and ask for support on upcoming policy matters. It is also used by the League to obtain a legislator's support for League priorities.
- League leaders will present the four major legislative initiatives. This past year, I presented on the prevention of gun violence.

Through out the day, Leaguers visit legislative offices in the Statehouse to meet and advocate with legislators. Some of these visits are scheduled in advance with designated topics. Others are drop-in visits to leave advocacy literature.

Priority Legislation

- ▶ Four measures are selected as priority legislation

Priority Legislation
Voting ACCESS
Birthing Justice
PFAS (Omnibus)
Prevention of Gun Violence (Omnibus)

- Heavily featured in the LWVMA Monthly Newsletter and Action Alerts.
- The main advocacy themes of the Annual Lobby Day on Beacon Hill.

Priority Legislation: PFAs

- ▶ An Act to Protect MA Public Health from PFAS
- ▶ S.1356/H197



The Problem

- PFAs (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are 12,000 manufactured chemicals used in many products such as cooking, clothing, cosmetics and more.
- They are highly toxic and linked to cancer, weakened immune system, and other adverse health outcome.
- PFAS do not break down. They are known as “forever chemicals”.
- There is little knowledge about how to neutralize them.
- They are absorbed by our bodies from food, water, air, and direct contact.

The PFA Bill's Solution:

- Bans intentionally added PFAS to priority products such as packaging, children's products, cookware by 2026.
- Bans most intentionally added PFAS by 2030.
- Exceptions for health and safety reasons.
- Requires labelling by 2026
- Restricts discharge into groundwater/surface water.
- Provides an education program.
- Creates a remediation fund.

ISSUE: How to clean up what is already in the environment.

Priority Legislation: Gun Violence

- ▶ An Act Modernizing Firearms Laws
- ▶ HD.4420 and S.tbd



The Problem

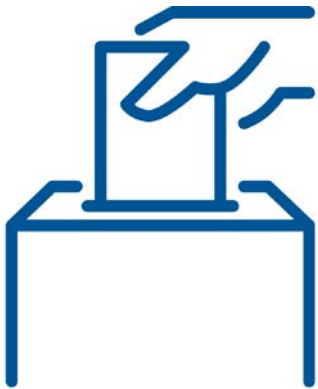
- The number of firearms in the US continues to increase. Research shows more guns do not make communities safer. US gun homicide rate is 26X higher than other higher income countries.
- There is insufficient information to determine if gun ownership makes individuals/families safer and under what circumstance.
- Ghost guns are easier to make, untraceable, and may not be illegal.
- Carry laws allow weapons almost everywhere. This increases the probability of gun violence.
- Red Flag laws are effective but the range of people who can request them is narrow.
- There are loopholes in the definition of assault-style weapons which permit ownership.

The Gun Violence Bill's Solution:

- Modernizes the existing registration system. Requires all firearms be serialized and registered thereby providing data to trace weapons used in crimes and reduce the flow of illegal firearms.
- Expands the types of people who can request a protective order to include school administrators, medical professionals, and employers.
- Prohibits carrying a firearm onto private property not open to the public without the permission of the owner.
- Clarifies the definition of an assault rifle and closes loopholes on modifying firearms into illegal automatic weapons.
- Increases data on gun crimes for researches to determine patterns of violence and propose solutions.

Priority Legislation: Voting ACCESS

- ▶ An Act Making Voting Administrative Changes to Create Equitable Systemic Solutions
- ▶ S.410



The Problem

- MA does not allow same day voter registration. This limits access to segments of voters to participate in democracy.
- Failure to respond to a town census can have a voter removed from the voter register. This reduces voter participation.
- In MA there is voter confusion between a request for a mail in ballot and a request for an absentee ballot.
- Voter participation in MA in municipal elections is a low 15%

The Voting ACCESS Bill's Solution:

- Allows voters to register and vote the same day at the polling station. This has shown to increase voter participation. It is less costly than provisional ballots.
- Prohibits towns from removing voters from the registrar for failing to respond to a town census. This bill will still allow for registrar accuracy through an updated process.
- Combines the mail-in ballot request and the absentee ballot request.
- Requires 4-year inspection at the polls for accessibility.

Note: Voter impersonation fraud is less than one in a million

Priority Legislation: Birthing Justice

- ▶ An Act Relative to Birthing Justice
- ▶ S1415



The Problem

- Services for postpartum depression are not covered by all insurances.
- MA has double the number of maternal deaths compared to other developed countries.
- Black women die 2X more than white women from pregnancy and postpartum related complications.

The Birthing Justice Bill's Solution:

- Requires Medicaid to cover screening for postpartum depression.
- Establishes a protocol for the regulation and certification of midwives.
- Requires Medicaid to cover Doula Services.
- Requires the DPH to establish local health agencies.

Discussion Points

- How to increase Plymouth League's participation in State endorsed legislation?
- Legislative Update at our in-person quarterly meetings?
- Develop an instruction guide to provide oral/written testimony at the hearing for the bill?
- Should we do more to engage local legislators?
- Other?