



The League of Women  
Voters of Hingham

# Hingham Voter

Serving the Towns of Hingham, Hull, Cohasset and Norwell

JUNE 2012

## LWVH Board 2011 - 2013

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## President's Letter

Hello,

For those of you who were able to make our Annual Meeting, I think you walked away with the same impression I did... a perfect evening!

When I looked around the room, I was reminded of all of the contributions our members have made to our League and town. Our members have sat or presently sit on the Advisory Committee; Government Study Committee; Planning Board; CPC; Board of Selectmen; School PTOs and a multitude of sub committees.

It was great to see past, present and future members in attendance too! I have heard on numerous occasions from our members that they love the depth of knowledge and generational span of our members. We are admired by many Leagues for retaining long term members and attracting a younger generation. I hope this continues.

With all of this "can-do" perspective it is no surprise that our League has accomplished a lot this year. The Forums, Warrant Review, State of the State, LWVMA Council, LWVH by-law review, Candidates Night and Day on the

Hill provided each of us with the opportunity to better understand our local League, Hingham and Massachusetts issues. I personally feel like I am a more informed voter. The League challenges me to not listen to the rhetoric but to try to educate myself on matters.

Ellen Zane was a fitting end to this year. I am sure we all could have listened to Ms. Zane for hours as she discussed the many challenges we face in keeping health care costs down. Some questions were answered however by addressing the complexity of the issue; I was reminded to look deeper into the subject when casting judgment.

I wish you a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you next September. In the meantime, please shoot me and the Board any thoughts you might have which will continue to strengthen our League!

Regards,

Kate



Kate Boland with Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker, Ellen Zane, former CEO, Tufts Healthcare.

## Annual State of the State Recap

### Guest Speakers - State Representative Garrett Bradley and State Senator Robert Hedlund

March 2012

20 people were in attendance at this year's annual State of the State Forum on March 15, 2012. Senator Bob Hedlund and Representative Garrett Bradley were our guest speakers.

This year they each gave a brief summary of recent accomplishments and what they have been working on this year. Then we delved into Q&A. Senator Hedlund talked about the many committees he serves, with his favorite being the Transportation Committee. He is also constantly working on 40B Housing Committee which is as always, very important. He currently serves as the Assistant Minority Leader in the state Senate. Being a minority in the Senate makes it essential that he participates in all of the votes and discussions.

Representative Bradley has been busy not only with the local responsibilities, he now has the job of Assistant Whip in the House of Representatives. As a big vote comes up, Bradley is responsible for addressing concerns, fears and issues of the members of the House. It is a unique role in government as he is in constant contact with the Minority and Majority Leaders and the Governor.

A question was asked about the amount of time Bradley now has to spend on local issues, and he mentioned he has more face time and pull by being in front of governmental leaders and is able to weigh in on the issues more.

Hedlund mentioned the problem of party lines with government on a local and national scale.

Little tidbit of information – The Patriot Ledger posts the bills that are voted on and the results.

MBTA - Most of the time was spent on discussing the MBTA issues. The MBTA is \$8.6 million in debt. The MBTA has proposed eliminating the \$3.7m subsidy to the Boat in order to reduce its massive budget gap. Senator Hedlund and other local officials have vehemently opposed this proposal. Officials of the MBTA have held hearings in Hingham and Hull and will vote on the proposals mid-April. Bradley believes that an adhoc committee is needed to find a long-term fix. Hedlund also mentioned that it seems as though internal changes have not been planned or implemented and they are just “kicking the can around”. Bottom line is there is no money – that even MBTA salaries are being paid for with capital debt. One LWWH member of the LWWH suggested that Massachusetts needs to look at mass transportation as a whole. Massport focuses on the airport, MBTA focuses on trains and busses, and there should be a third group created that focuses on economic development of the Boston Harbor and water.

Special Education - There was a short discussion on the growing issue of Special Education. There is a need for funding solutions on a state level. A bill is being currently worked on to create a “rainy day fund” for education. There have been discussions about possibly taking over the burden of Out of District Placements on a state level and other ideas have been discussed as well. The issue hasn't hit a boiling point yet, but eventually and most likely will occur.



## Annual Meeting Recap

### Guest Speaker – Ellen Zane, former CEO of Tufts Medical

May 22, 2012

There were 39 attendees at this year's Annual Meeting, a really great turnout. Much was accomplished at this year's business portion of the meeting. Membership dues were raised to \$60/year to cover the increased PMP fees that our local league pays to State and National. The new nominating committee was announced and accepted, as well as the annual budget and the new bylaw changes.

The evening's guest speaker was Ellen Zane, former CEO of Tufts Medical and Hingham resident, who gave a wonderful presentation on the "Five Drivers of Healthcare Costs". The five drivers were as follows:

1. Doctors/Hospitals: There is no standard in practicing medicine in the US and there should be. Having best practices and understanding the variations and the outcomes is key. Doctors want the best equipment and technology, but it doesn't always mean the best care.
2. Insurance Companies: Insurance companies are over reserved. There is no ceiling on reserves and insurance companies make \$.10 - .13 cents on each premium, so where is the motivation to lower premiums? Also what is the cost to manage the 16,000 health care plans offered by i.e. - BCBS? This cost must be passed on to the consumers. So, the question is "is there any value in having insurance companies"?"
3. Businesses/Corporations: Employers want their employees to be happy and to have access to any hospital /doctor. This means higher premiums. Martha Coakley did a study recently and found that the top hospitals did not always perform the best. Top tier hospitals like Childrens Hospital and MGH charge 200-300% more than other community hospitals.
4. Consumers: Everyone wants to go to the top hospitals in Boston to get the best care. But routine operations are fine in community hospitals. If something more is needed like a transplant or something more complex, then go to the best in Boston. One changing idea is to have consumers understand the costs associated with medical care, and to incentivize consumers to shop around.
5. Government: Why are healthcare costs rising and so high in Massachusetts? Because almost everyone in MA is now insured—roughly 98%. In order to achieve this Medicaid was cut from \$.95 to \$.74 on the dollar so that the state could insure 400K more people.

## Voter Services Update By Kathleen Nugent

From September through November 2011 the League of Women voters of Massachusetts has hosted conference call meetings addressing points of interest and concern for the membership at large and voter services specifically. Kathleen Nugent, Vice President of Voter Services participated on the conference call meetings on behalf of the Hingham League.

The first series of calls were conducted under the auspices of the ad hoc Advocacy Policy Committee to draft a formal policy defining what the Massachusetts League considers acceptable activities and procedures to advocate on behalf of League consensus-based positions without compromising the League's overall policy of non-partisanship. This committee researched other state league's advocacy policies as was available

and gleaned from them language and points of importance to include in an eventual formal Policy for the Massachusetts League. Points discussed in the proposed Massachusetts Advocacy Policy included distinctions between advocacy and lobbying, addressed procedures for inaction when a local league disagrees with a State or National League Position, and recommendations for when LWVMA participates in advocacy in coalition with other groups.

A draft advocacy policy was completed and voted on in November 2011 and submitted to the Governance Committee for review. A copy of the final version of the new Advocacy Policy is available on the LWVMA website.

## Photos from Annual Meeting



*L-R: Treasurer Marisa Costello and former Board Member Emily Mondon*



*L-R: Members Jane Malme, Elizabeth Blucke, Cindy Coe and MJ Schultz*



*Guest Speaker, Ellen Zane, former CEO Tufts Medical*



*L-R: Membership Chair, Liza O'Reilly & President, Kate Boland*



### Day on the Hill 2012 - "Democracy in Danger; Money, Media and Manipulation"

This year's event was on April 25th, at the State House in Gardner Auditorium. Keynote speakers were Pam Wilmot, *Executive Director of Common Cause Massachusetts* and Jay Kaufman, *MA State Representative*. LWVMA Specialists discussed important legislation the League is following, which we received the information ahead of time in April. You can visit this link <http://www.lwvma.org/DOTH%202012%20packet.pdf> to see the hard work LWVMA is doing on the upcoming Bills. They lay-out the Bill and reasons for supporting it. Lobbying the state legislature is one of the defining activities of the League of Women Voters, and everyone who shows up in person makes an enormous difference in the success of our legislative efforts. After the program, Kate Boland, President of LWV of Hingham, dropped off information to Senator Hedlund's and Representative Bradley's office regarding the **Pushing Back on Money Politics, 2012 - Public Forum** hosted by LWV Concord-Carlisle and WBUR co-sponsor. Tom Ashbrook, Host of 90.9 WBUR Boston's *On Point* moderated. A panel of experts shared their views on the role of money in the 2012 landscape and discussed options for citizen action in response.

Representative Bradley left a message with our League thanking us for stopping by. Be sure to attend next year- it is really worth it!

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS REGISTERS OVER 1,000 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO VOTE

Local League of Women Voters chapters registered 1,156 high school students to vote during a statewide voter registration drive this spring. At least 15 Leagues across the state, from Martha's Vineyard and the Plymouth area to Northampton, partnered with high schools to register the first-time voters during lunch periods, extended homeroom periods and as caps and gowns were picked up for graduation. The League at the local, state and national levels has been working to sign up young voters and to encourage them to vote once they have registered.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
HINGHAM**

**[WWW.HINGHAM.MA.LWVNET.ORG](http://WWW.HINGHAM.MA.LWVNET.ORG)**

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*Democracy: The more you use it,  
the better it gets!*