



## *Green Mountain* CITIZEN

Fall 2021

### ***LWVVT Supports VT Constitutional Amendment***

The League of Women Voters of Vermont has been invited to join Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE), ACLU, and others in support of Proposition 5, an amendment to Vermont's Constitution that would ensure the right to personal reproductive liberty

The League of Women Voters of Vermont strongly supports Proposition 5, based on the position adopted by the LWVUS in 1983:

**The League of Women Voters believes public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices**

The League supports every woman's right of access to affordable, high quality reproductive health care, including access to abortion services and birth control. The LWVUS has advocated in Congress to protect these rights repeatedly in the years since the adoption of our position.

The LWVVT supported H.57, which prohibited interference with reproductive choice and was passed into law in June, 2019. Vermont continues to move forward with Prop. 5. The amendment would ensure that individual Vermonters can choose for themselves whether and when to become a parent, use temporary or permanent birth control, or seek abortion care. In 2022, the Vermont House of Representatives will vote on the amendment in its fourth and final stage of legislative review. If passed, the amendment will go to Vermont voters as a ballot measure in the 2022 General Election.

The current US Supreme Court allowed Texas' radical new abortion ban (S.B.8) to take effect and forced almost all abortions in Texas to come to an abrupt stop. In their next term, the Court will hear *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a case that could ban abortions after the 15<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. The case is a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*, meaning that current Supreme Court justices could decide to overturn, or further erode, federal constitutional protections for abortion care. If they do, decisions about abortion rights will revert to the states. With national protections now under threat, this amendment is as important as it has ever been.

Have questions, or want to get involved? Please reach out to League member Charlie Gliserman, Policy & Prop 5 Campaign Manager at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and Vermont Action Fund, at [charlie.gliserman@ppnne.org](mailto:charlie.gliserman@ppnne.org) or (802) 338-6811.

## Message from the Board Fall 2021

The LWVVT Board of Directors held its first meeting of the current term on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. A couple of months before, we bade farewell to Johnna Ferguson and Marilyn Blackwell who left the Board at the end of the last 2 year term and to Jesse Scarlato who resigned earlier this year. We were sad to see these very effective leaders leave the Board and we wished them well on their way. They are all active with League activities in the areas in which they live, and they expressed a willingness and a desire to assist the Board with carrying on the work of the League at both the state and national levels.

We welcomed the three new members to the Board at our Zoom meeting, all of whom have been active with the League and with other likeminded projects for a number of years. Susan Kuecker is a resident of Lyndonville, Anne Mixer is a resident of E. Montpelier, and Marguerite Adelman lives in Winooski. They joined Sue Racanelli, Sonja Schuyler, Madelyn Motta, Debbie Ramsdell, and David Horton, and were formally introduced in the Summer *Green Mountain Citizen*.

A year and a half ago, the Board joined billions around the world in practicing social distancing via Zoom. By the time our new Board members met with us, there had been ample time for all of us to acclimate ourselves to the mechanics of Zoom meetings.

Sue Racanelli, President of the Board, creates an agenda for each meeting. The agenda includes reports on the activities of the League around the state, the Treasurer's report, issues that need discussion, and occasional guests who will inform the Board on a subject that the Board is interested in or may take an interest in. Sue performs the daunting task of simultaneously being thorough with each agenda item and staying within the time allotted for the meeting. As Secretary and the scribe of the minutes, I face the challenge of writing down what I think is relevant to a topic while attempting to understand what is being said at the same time. This is somewhat compounded by the need for the meeting to move at an ample speed, so we are not stifling yawns.

The composition of the Board makes for a diversity in background and education. Many of us have a background in social work which enhances our ability to understand the impact of certain laws on specific populations. This, of course, reaches back to the foundation of the League when women did not have the vote. Many thought that with the passage of the 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> Amendments, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other enfranchising laws would do the trick; make voting legal, accessible, and easy to do. Although these and other amendments and laws were steps forward, there is a continued need for voting rights across our country and I am proud to be part of a group that is committed to ensuring voting rights and defending democracy.

Looking ahead, in the coming weeks and months we will review the march to the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment through the lens of the "Suffragist Reenactment Society" performed in ten venues around the state. We will consider the expansion of voting rights in municipal elections to non-citizens. We will educate the public about new election procedures. We will continue advocating for publicly funded health care. And we will spread the word about Prop. 5, to amend Vermont's constitution to guarantee the right to personal reproductive liberty.

David Horton

<p><b>The Green Mountain Citizen</b> is published four times per year by The League of Women Voters of Vermont</p> <p>Kate Rader, Editor</p> <p>Membership in the League includes a subscription.</p> <p>If you would like to join the League, go to our website, <a href="https://my.lwv.org/vermont">https://my.lwv.org/vermont</a>, e-mail, or write:</p> <p>League of Women Voters of Vermont P.O. Box 1391 Montpelier, VT 05601-1391 e-mail: <a href="mailto:League@lwvofvt.org">League@lwvofvt.org</a></p>
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## *Madeline Motta Appointed to LWVUS UN Observer Corps*



LWVVT member Madeline Motta has been appointed to the LWVUS United Nation Observer Corps.

Even before the United Nations was formally established, the LWV launched an unprecedented nationwide campaign to help build public understanding of the Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods agreements to establish the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. In support of the UN, the League trained more than 5000 speakers and distributed more than a million brochures during a six-month period.

At the UN Charter Conference in 1945, the League was one of 42 nongovernmental organizations invited by President Truman to serve as consultants to the U.S. delegation. Since then, the League has actively participated at the United Nations through its UN Observers; working with UN agencies, member states, and other NGOs to advance LWVUS positions, and by hosting League Day at the UN for League members.

The League consistently monitors U.S. actions at the UN, engaging in programs at the U.S. Mission and providing support for mutually held policies. Some of the LWVUS UN Observer Corps activities include submitting testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of Senate ratification of the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The LWVUS partnered with the Working Group on Girls (WGG), a coalition of 80+ NGOs dedicated to focusing governments on the plight of girls throughout the world. Together with the WGG, the League developed a comprehensive strategy to prevent sexual human trafficking.

The UN Observer program includes one Chief Observer and up to five UN Observer designees who participate in a variety of committees and activities dealing with global issues of climate change, human trafficking, and women's economic and political empowerment. For more about the UN Observer program can be found at

[www.lwv.org/united-nations-observers](http://www.lwv.org/united-nations-observers)

Motta is a Vermont Superior Court Assistant Judge and corporate and government ethics compliance consultant, lawyer, and academic. Dr. Motta completed her JSD, Doctorate in law degree from the Faculty of Law, McGill University with a focus on fiduciary law, ethics, and biomedical regulatory law. She holds a JD degree from the University of Massachusetts with extensive experience in antitrust in health care and she holds an MSW in clinical social work and community organization from McGill University School of Social Work.

She has advised Federal Agencies in Canada on complying with complex International and US human research regulations and authored Federal and Provincial policy and program recommendations on First Nations' community health, mental health, public safety, and judicial administration. She teaches bioethics to pre-med and allied health college students and has written numerous journal articles on emergent legal and bioethics issues.

Motta was instrumental in creating legislation and establishing the Vermont State Ethics Commission and subsequently was elected Chair of the State Ethics Commission.

She established the LWV Inmate Voter Registration Initiative through an LWVUS grant to register inmates to vote in Vermont correctional facilities. In 2020, collaborating with the VT Department of Corrections, she produced a professional inmate instructional video to assist inmates to register to vote given that the COVID pandemic had closed correctional facilities to LWV volunteers. She was also responsible for the translation of LWV voter education materials into Somali, Nepalese, and Chinese to reach out to new citizens in Vermont. Madeline co-chaired the LWV education committee during the 2020 elections, and through the media instructed Vermont citizens on mail-in ballot voting rules. She was awarded the LWVVT June Carmichael Award for Outstanding Service to the League in 2019.

## *Play Explores Women's Suffrage Movement*



*Vermont actors Kathryn Blume, Sarah Mell, and Julia Sioss tell the story of how women won the right to vote.*

*The Suffragist Reenactment Society*, a play commissioned by the Vermont Suffrage Centennial Alliance, can be seen in person at ten venues across the state. There is no fee to attend, however, we recommend you make a reservation at <https://bit.ly/suffragistreenactment>.

The play is a fast-paced journey of how women fought and won the right to vote. Full of facts, fun, and historical figures, the three-member cast asks you to consider the stories we hear and, more importantly, those we don't, when we teach and learn about the history of social movements.

For the safety of staff, patrons, and guests, we are requiring face coverings while in the theater and proof of vaccination or negative COVID test. In addition, seating is limited to 50 percent of capacity.

**7:30 p.m., Saturday October 2**

*Burlington*, Main Street Landing /Black Box, 60 Lake Street. Panel discussion follows.

**7:30 p.m., Friday October 8**

*St. Albans*, First Congregational Church.

**7:30 p.m., Saturday October 9**

*Rutland*, West Rutland Town Hall.

**2:00 p.m., Sunday October 10**

*Vergennes*, Vergennes Opera House.

**7:30 p.m., Friday October 15**

*Newport*, United Church of Newport.

**7:30 p.m., Saturday October 16**

*St. Johnsbury*, Catamount Arts.

**2:00 p.m., Sunday October 17**

*White River Junction*, Briggs Opera House.

**7:30 p.m., Friday October 22**

*Bennington*, Bennington Performing Arts Center.

**7:30 p.m., Saturday October 23**

*Brattleboro*, Latchis Theatre.

**7:30 p.m., Saturday October 30**

*Montpelier*, Montpelier City Hall Arts Center, 39 Main Street

## ***Youth Voter Project Active through the Summer***

Improvements to Vermont's COVID status in early summer made it possible for our Youth Voter Project to reach out to register new voters. Following the idea of going where people go, we decided to target farmers' markets in Central Vermont during the summer. Through the summer League volunteers staffed voter registration tables at the following markets: Barre (twice), Montpelier, Northfield (twice), and Morrisville. We also tabled at the Burlington Church Street Marketplace pedestrian mall.

Rainouts occurred early in other areas and inspired the purchase of a tent to protect volunteers from too much sun or rain. The tent was also used at the August 14 VSCA celebration on the State House lawn.

Everywhere we went, people thanked us for our presence and for encouraging young people to register and vote. Although we did not register a large number of people, we did establish a presence and visibility. Local announcements by members in Front Porch Forum helped direct people to our tables.

We are eager to return to high schools and college campuses to encourage young voter registration and are waiting to see how the schools will manage having outside groups present. Our hope is that by spring, when we are in the year of the mid-term elections and voting in general has a higher profile, that we can make arrangements of some kind to again go where the people go to promote youth registration and voting.

If you are interested in this work and would like to volunteer or get ideas about how to do this work in your own area, please contact Anne Mixer at [amixer@comcast.net](mailto:amixer@comcast.net).

## ***LWVCEN Plans New Library Series***

The LWV Central Vermont has begun work on the 2021/22 public issue series in partnership with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier.

This year we address racism as a public health issue in a series of five programs. Titles/topics listed below are tentative.

November 10: **Overview: How Does Racism Affect Public Health.** Dr. Maria Mercedes Avila (invited), Asst. Prof. of Pediatrics; Adjunct Asst. Prof. of Nursing, University of Vermont.

December 8: Possible panel on **How Racism Plays out in Services to Individuals**, especially communication, pain management, mental health.

January 12: **How Does Racism Affect Environmental Health?** (land use, racial justice, health). Jonathan Rosenblum, Visiting Prof. of Law, Albany Law School and Prof. of Law, Vermont Law School; Exec. Dir., Sustainable Development Code.

February 9: **How is Vermont Responding?** TBD, possibly a panel featuring examples of work being done in state and local government and health care institutions to promote equity and end racism.

March 9: **What Else is Required?** One or more speakers with ideas about additional efforts needed, e.g., universal, publicly-funded/privately delivered health care.

These programs will be presented in-person at the Library and by Zoom. All programs will be held from 7:00-8:30 p.m. More, definitive information will be provided as the dates approach.

## *LWVVT Health Care Committee Update*

Mary Alice Bisbee and Betty Keller

**STATE BUSINESS:** The healthcare committee has been following the happenings in Vermont as the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) has OK'd a huge request for funding for the UVMHC and denied any extension of payments for Springfield Hospital which has been in arrears. Meanwhile, there seems to be little concern for finding more staff to decrease the huge wait times for both primary care and specialist providers.

Right now the GMCB and the Agency of Human Services in Vermont are deciding what to do with OneCare. The five year “demonstration” project is approaching the end of the fourth year, and if Vermont wants an extension, we need to ask for it by the end of December, 2021. Many health care advocates, including LWVVT, oppose any extension, as it has added another layer of administrative complexity - and expense - without improving outcomes or reducing costs. Based on the “Virtual Town Meeting” for the contract extension Sept. 23, it sounds like the state is deciding whether to seek a one-year extension instead of a five-year extension, without any consideration of not extending it at all. They indicated that they will take public comment by email to [Kristin.Kellett@vermont.gov](mailto:Kristin.Kellett@vermont.gov), but did not give a deadline, so please write soon. The subject line should be: APM Extension Comments. *You may identify yourself as a League member if you are writing in opposition to extension of the contract.*

**MEDICARE ADVANTAGE:** Nationally, we are still concerned about how private insurers are signing up new retirees for Medicare Advantage and thus taking away taxpayer-raised dollars from the highly successful and popular public program, Medicare. Medicare Advantage (MA) plans seek to enroll relatively healthy retirees, then “upcode” to get higher reimbursement for them than they should. *Advocacy by calling (202-224-3121) or writing to our Congressional Delegation should be as individuals.*

**RECONCILIATION ACT:** Right now, with the Reconciliation Act they are working on in

Congress, we have the opportunity to improve and expand Medicare by adding dental, vision and hearing; adding a cap to out-of-pocket spending; and lowering the eligibility age. This can be funded by allowing Medicare to negotiate for fair prices on medications - like the countries that have single payer systems. Lobbyists for drug companies want no negotiating, but if negotiating is allowed, they want it limited to comparing the prices to what US insurance companies pay. We should be allowed to negotiate based on international comparisons, not just comparing to prices here at home.

Please let Senators Leahy and Sanders and Rep. Welch know how important that cap on out-of-pocket spending is, and that you want full support for drug price negotiations to pay for it, but *remember you are writing as an individual* when you write to members of the US Congress when it isn't an Action Alert by the national LWV.

**OTHER FEDERAL BILLS:** *As an individual*, you can contact Rep. Welch and urge him to fight for the Medicare for All Act of 2021 (H.R.1976), and the State Based Universal Health Care Act of 2021 (H.R.3775).

**HEALTH CARE DISPARITIES:** The LWVVT is co-sponsoring an event hosted by the LWV Davis (CA) Area featuring Dr. Susan Rogers, the president of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP) – see p.9. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/173140998387> Eighteen state leagues and 38 local leagues, from Texas to Florida to Michigan and many points in between and beyond, are co-sponsoring.

Please access more information and join us in following either national or statewide health care issues, or both, by visiting the NEW national LWV Advocacy web page at <https://lwvhealthcarereform.org/> or for state issues, contact [maryalicebisbee@gmail.com](mailto:maryalicebisbee@gmail.com).

## *Noncitizen Voting?*

Montpelier voters in 2018 and Winooski citizens in 2020 approved proposed charter changes that would allow its noncitizen residents to vote in municipal elections. Both charter changes were brought before the legislature in 2021, passed approval but were vetoed by Governor Scott. In June, state lawmakers overrode the Governor's veto, granting non-citizens in Montpelier and Winooski the right to vote in local elections.

The League took no action on these bills, because we do not have a position on noncitizen voting. League advocacy positions are backed by a study of the pros and cons of an issue, followed by consensus of the membership of what our position, if any, should be.

In anticipation that the question of noncitizen voting will be a recurring one here in Vermont, members have expressed an interest in our being a voice in the debate, which will require a study of the issue. Normally, a study must be adopted at our biannual state convention. However, the board may request a study, and at its September meeting the board voted to support a study of noncitizen voting with intent of coming to a consensus.

Study committees are self-appointed, and usually are made up of 4-8 members. The committee gathers information on all sides of the issue, provides that information to the membership, and through a process of (non-leading) questions, arrive at a consensus position. Upon approval by the board, that position may be used to advocate on the issue.

If you are interested in being part of the committee to study this issue, please email Sue Racanelli, [lwvofvt@gmail.com](mailto:lwvofvt@gmail.com).



In July, Treasurer Debbie Ramsdell sent membership renewal notices out. If you have renewed your membership, we thank you. If you have not renewed your membership, please do so now.

Our members play a vital role as the League continues to be the premier resource for reliable, accurate and nonpartisan information that is much needed for a healthy democracy. We have a lot of work ahead of us to repair serious damage done to our democracy and to push for progress in voting-rights, issue advocacy, and citizen outreach.

Membership starts July 1 of each year. Annual dues for 2021-22 are: \$50 Individual; \$75 Household (two persons at the same address) and \$5 Student. Membership in LWVVT includes membership in the National League as well. Please note that dues are not tax-deductible. LWVVT is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(4) organization.

There are two ways that you can renew: Online at <https://lwvofvt.org/membership> or by check. Mail to: LWVVT c/o Debbie Ramsdell, Treasurer, 7986 Plank Road, Unit 10, Bristol, VT 05443.

***Members add strength to our voice.***  
Renew today.

## *In Memoriam*



Long time League member Amy Bond passed away on July 2 at the age of 98. Amy served on both the Champlain Valley and state boards. Her most lasting influence was her work to develop a plan to

revise the School Funding Formula to make it more equitable. She had served on the South Burlington School Board for 13 years, so she had first-hand experience with the state funding of education.

The League had reached consensus that the education funding formula should rely much more heavily on the income tax rather than the property tax. Amy took this position and developed a formula which relied primarily on income tax, and, more importantly, did the data analysis to back it up. She spearheaded the League's lobbying effort. Although the League's plan was not adopted, it did persuade the Legislature to use

income in the formula. The "income sensitivity" used to determine the state education tax payments was the result.

Amy had strong opinions which she could justify, so her participation in consensus meetings was always interesting. She was an insightful member of budget committees and someone willing to make thorough reviews of our Bylaws. She remained active until her failing health curtailed her activities. The League was fortunate to have her as a member and leader.

On a personal note, Amy was a role model and mentor. I first met Amy when I was a pregnant graduate student in the UVM Zoology Department. Amy's title was Administrative Assistant to the Zoology and Botton Departments. This nondescript title did not convey her full role. Whenever there was a problem, Amy was the first person to call.

Sonja Schuyler

### [This just out: LWVUS Updates Filibuster Stance](#)

WASHINGTON – This week, the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of the United States voted unanimously to support filibuster reform, and as necessary, elimination of the filibuster. LWVUS board president Dr. Deborah Ann Turner issued the following statement:

“For far too long an archaic rule has prevented the US Senate from fully functioning and has allowed a minority of senators to block action of the majority. This roadblock runs counter to the heart of our democracy and the will of the people who voted for senators to represent their interests and uphold our democracy.

“Our democracy faces the challenge of our lifetime. We are at a crossroads with anti-voting laws sweeping the nation and threatening our freedom to vote. We need Congress to take bold action and pass the *Freedom to Vote Act* now. We cannot wait for another election to pass us by.

“The League has a history of calling for filibuster reform to ensure a functioning democracy. Today, we take our stance a step further and support the elimination of the filibuster.

“The filibuster is a relic of the Jim Crow era. It has a long history of use to defend slavery, preserve segregation, and block civil rights. It is time to amend the filibuster to ensure our government can govern for the people.

“It is time to fix or nix the filibuster to save our right to vote.”



## **Health Reform & Social Justice: Opportunities for Reducing Inequity and Addressing Health Disparities**

*An Evening with Dr. Susan Rogers, President, Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP)*



**Wednesday, October 6th  
6:00PM - 8:00PM**  
*On Zoom*

Register at:



<https://bit.ly/3u1jWWT>

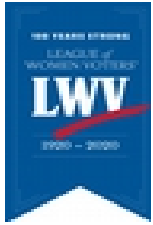
On Wednesday October 6 from 3:00-5:00 pm (ET), The League of Women Voters Davis (CA) Area will be hosting a virtual Community Forum, “Health Reform & Social Justice: Opportunities for Reducing Inequity and Addressing Health Disparities”.

For this event, the League will be hosting an evening with Dr. Susan Rogers, President of Physicians for a National Health Plan (PNHP). Dr. Rogers’s presentation will include an overview of the U.S. health care system through a social justice lens, followed by a discussion highlighting disparities resulting from our current policies and opportunities to improve inequities through health reform. The forum will conclude with an audience Q&A.

Dr. Rogers is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians and currently an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Rush University. She has recently retired from her hospitalist practice in Chicago at Stroger Hospital of Cook County. She has previously served as co-director of medical student teaching at Stroger and as Medical Director of Near North Health Service Corp, a Chicago FQHC.

This forum aims to educate voters about our current healthcare model and how it impacts local care access, affordability, quality and equity. Our guest speaker provides insights into how health reform can improve each of these to optimize community health and wellness. The LWVDA supports the National League healthcare positions in support of an affordable, accessible, quality, and equitable health care system, critical for the health, safety and economic security of all communities. Becoming an informed voter is fundamental to ensuring the engagement needed to affect meaningful reform. The future of our community health and healthcare systems will rely upon votes cast by those with a better understanding of current needs and resources and our opportunities to enact needed change.

To help speakers best address your concerns, questions, and issues, we encourage attendees to please submit them in advance to [komalh@lwvdavisarea.org](mailto:komalh@lwvdavisarea.org) before October 4.



# **GREEN MOUNTAIN CITIZEN**

**League of Women Voters of Vermont**

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