

VOTING IS VOICE: WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND BEYOND

October 20, 2020, 7:00-8:30 pm
A Virtual Panel Discussion Sponsored by:



One hundred years ago, the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified to affirm women's right to vote in our country. However, not all women were included at that time and the voting franchise still does not extend equally to all citizens today. This event commemorates the centennial of women's suffrage and also discusses the need to carry forward the movement for voting rights.

A panel of accomplished women will share from their own personal and career experiences to reflect on why voting and elections matter so much. Panelists will consider both the success and shortcomings of the suffrage movement of the past; the empowerment of new voters today; and what future work remains to ensure citizens across all communities can and do exercise their voting rights.

PRESENTERS & PANELISTS:

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, MA State Senator, 2nd Suffolk District (panelist)

Elizabeth Foster-Nolan, Director of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (presenter)

Lori Lander, Artist and Community Activist. Co-founder, Many Helping Hands 365, Board Member, Cambridge Community Foundation (panelist)

Layli Maparyan, Ph.D, Executive Director, Wellesley Centers for Women (panel moderator)

Susan Sidel, Member and Volunteer, The Philanthropy Connection (presenter)

Melanie Torres, Interim Executive Director, Project Citizenship (presenter)

Susan Ware, Honorary Women's Suffrage Centennial Historian at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study (panelist)

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



Sonia Chang-Díaz is the first Latina elected to the Massachusetts State Senate. She is serving her sixth term on behalf of the Second Suffolk District of Boston. She was a primary architect of the landmark 2019 Student Opportunity Act that doubled Massachusetts' investment in closing the achievement gap for our lowest-income students. She has also helped to pass reforms to the state's CORI and criminal justice systems, curtail the misuse of special education dollars, and protect civil rights for transgender Bay Staters. Senator Chang-Díaz serves as co-chair of the Senate's Racial Justice Working Group and Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities and the Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy. She also serves as a member of the Joint Committees on the Judiciary, Election Laws, Financial Services, and Public Safety & Homeland Security.



Elizabeth Foster-Nolan is the Director of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA). This past year, she chaired the LWVMA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, was a member of the Voter Engagement Committee, and chaired the Moderator Training and Mentoring Sub-Committee. A social worker for many years, Elizabeth earned her JD in 1990 from Duquesne University School of Law in Pittsburgh, PA. She was the Director of Professional Development for a 200 member Boston law firm, where she was a member of her firm's Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee and was also elected to a national committee tasked with creating a competency model for Professional Development Specialists.



Lori Lander is a Cambridge-based artist, community activist and volunteer, who is passionate about civic engagement. She currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Cambridge Arts Council and the Board of Trustees of the Cambridge Community Foundation. She co-founded Many Helping Hands 365, a civic engagement non-profit, that organizes an annual Martin Luther King Day of Service, an annual gun buy-back program, and volunteering resources for the Cambridge community. Since 2010, she has hosted monthly breakfast gatherings of 50-70+ people to discuss varied issues relevant to our times.



Layli Maparyan, Ph.D., is the Katherine Stone Kaufmann '67 Executive Director of the Wellesley Centers for Women and Professor of Africana Studies at Wellesley College. She is best known for her scholarship in the area of womanism. She currently sits on the Board of Directors of the Global Fund for Women, where she is Chair of the Governance Committee. She also serves as International Board Chair of the Sustainable Market Women's Fund and is a long-time member of the Ms. Magazine Committee of Scholars. Prior to joining WCW, Maparyan was Associate Professor of Women's Studies and associated faculty of African American Studies at Georgia State University. Before GSU, she was Assistant Professor of Psychology and African American Studies at the University of Georgia. She holds a Ph.D from Temple University, a M.S. from Pennsylvania State University, and is a graduate of Spelman College.



Susan Sidel has been a member of The Philanthropy Connection (TPC) since its founding. She is an active TPC volunteer, having served on grant teams and co-chairing the annual meeting and event committee. Susan has her Master in Social Work and has experience in the health, gerontology, and educational arenas.



Melanie Torres is the Interim Executive Director of Project Citizenship. She joined Project Citizenship in 2015, first serving as Director of Programs and Operations and a Department of Justice Accredited Representative. She manages citizenship workshops, immigrant outreach, grants to community partners, and finance. Melanie graduated from Boston University with a degree in International Relations and then worked abroad in Latin America. She previously also worked as a Site Manager at Chelsea Community Schools, providing ESOL, arts, and recreation courses. Melanie previously served on the Commission for Immigrant Rights and Citizenship for the City of Cambridge from 2016-2018.



Susan Ware is a pioneer in the field of women's history and a leading feminist biographer. She is the author and editor of numerous books on twentieth-century U.S. history. In addition to serving as the General Editor of American National Biography, she is currently the Honorary Women's Suffrage Centennial Historian at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. She is the author of *Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote* (2019) and the editor of the Library of America anthology *American Women's Suffrage: Voices from the Long Struggle for the Vote, 1776-1965* (2020). She also served as a historical consultant to the American Experience documentary "The Vote."

ABOUT THE SPONSORS

Project Citizenship seeks to increase the naturalization rate in Massachusetts and beyond, by providing free, high quality legal services to permanent residents to help them become U.S. citizens. Services include eligibility screening, application assistance, legal referrals and all materials needed to apply for U.S. citizenship.

The Philanthropy Connection is a public charity with a mission to inspire, teach, and enable women to engage in collective philanthropy in order to provide grants to charitable organizations that improve the quality of life for low-resource individuals and families living in Massachusetts.

The Wellesley Centers for Women is a research and action institute at Wellesley College that is focused on women and gender and driven by social change. Its mission is to advance gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing through high-quality research, theory, and action.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Founded in 1920, LWVMA has been a respected and trusted voice for citizen participation in our democracy. **The League of Women Voters of Newton** is a local league of the LWVMA.