



League of Women Voters of Amherst
P.O. Box 2372
Amherst, MA 01004-2372

June 18, 2021

To: Amherst Town Council

The Amherst League of Women Voters and its Racial Justice Task Force would like to express our support for the Community Safety Working Group:

- We strongly support the Town Manager’s continuing the CSWG, understanding that when their current charge is complete they will need a new charge with new expectations and possibly some new members. It is important to build and sustain the trusting connections that they have made with the BIPOC community. It would be a step backwards to discontinue their participation in the process of creating new institutions and programs to further racial equity in Amherst.
- We encourage the Town Council to accept the vision that the CSWG has proposed. This will be an important tangible response to the Town’s Resolution (December 7, 2020) to end structural racism in Amherst.
- We encourage the Town Council and Town Manager to work together to find the resources necessary to successfully implement the CRESS pilot program and to hire the DEI Director. It is also important to begin planning to realize the other CSWG recommendations. Each aspect of the CSWG's in-depth proposal combines to create a strategy for building equity and justice in Amherst for all of our residents.

We also note that at the state level, the LWVMA is supporting the Alternatives for Community Emergency Services Grant Program (H.2519/S.1552) to increase the availability of non-law-enforcement, unarmed community-based response options for calls to 911. Amherst may be able to obtain funding from this or similar state programs.

Jessica Ryan, Spokesperson
League of Women Voters of Amherst

Marcie Sclove, Chair
Racial Justice Task Force
League of Women Voters of Amherst

The League of Women Voters of Amherst is a non-partisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and is committed to promoting equitable, fair and just treatment for all individuals and groups in our community.

Please see also the attached resolution passed by the delegates to the LWVUS 2020 Convention.



The LWVUS Convention passed the following resolution on June 27, 2020:

Whereas, the League believes in individual liberties, civil rights, human rights, and voting rights writ large; we defend democracy and oppose all threats to these constitutional rights;

Therefore,

We Resolve First, that the League advocate against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes;

We Resolve Second, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC) deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done, so that regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and gender identity or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."