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Republican Senator Richard Ross Refuses to Debate Democratic Nominee Becca Rausch
League of Women Voters "very disappointed" by Ross's refusal of public forum invitation

(Needham, MA) – In a statement shared yesterday, October 8, with both candidates for MA State Senate in the Norfolk, Bristol & Middlesex District, the Wayland, Needham, and Wellesley chapters of the League of Women Voters (LWV), a nonpartisan organization dedicated to an engaged democracy, expressed their distinct disappointment at incumbent Senator Richard Ross's refusal to even acknowledge, let alone accept, their invitation to participate in a public candidate forum with Democratic Nominee Becca Rausch.

The letter, from LWV-Wayland President Mary Antes, LWV-Needham President Karen Price, and LWV-Wellesley President Anne Rippey Turtle, noted, "On September 15, 2018, Debbie Winnick, Voter Service Chair of the League of Woman Voters of Needham, on behalf of the three active Leagues in this district (Needham, Wellesley and Wayland), emailed both of you to schedule a candidate event. We had made arrangements and proposed to have an in-studio event at WayCAM, the Wayland television station." The LWV requested responses from both candidates by September 19.

The letter continues, "Ms. Rausch, through her campaign manager Kat Cline, responded with available dates and times on September 17. We received no response from Senator Ross to the original email, nor to a second email from Mary Antes of the Wayland League sent September 19, extending the time to respond to September 21. Still getting no response, Ms. Antes telephoned Senator Ross' office and/or Erika Jacques (District Director) five times, sometimes speaking with someone and leaving a message, and sometimes leaving a voice message. At no point from September 15 to October 5 was an email reply or return telephone call made from Sen. Ross or his staff."

Ross's refusal stands in stark contrast to incumbent elected officials at all levels of state government, including Governor Charlie Baker, who have already committed to similar debates and forums in advance of the upcoming election. Notably, during the timeframe referenced in the LWV's letter, the Rausch campaign made repeated inquiries to the League of Women Voters expressing the Democratic Nominee's eagerness to debate her opponent and officially schedule the forum.

Last night's letter from the LWV chapter presidents ended, "We have concluded that Senator Ross has refused the offer from the League of Women Voters to hold a face-to-face, in-studio event with his opponent.... When candidates refuse to participate in opportunities to help their future constituents learn more about them, this is a loss for voters. We want to provide a platform for voters to learn about

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who will be on their ballot. We are very disappointed that the voters in this district will most likely not have this opportunity.”

Rausch stated, in response: “Ross’s intentional inaction is both disappointing and unacceptable, and displays deep disregard for the voters in our district and the democratic process. He is one of the most conservative members of our State Senate, and he refuses to defend his record to constituents. There is too much at stake in this election for Senator Ross to deny voters the conversation they deserve about their real and valid concerns, including affordable health care, public education funding, access to safe and legal abortion, fighting the opioid epidemic, gun violence prevention, and advancing transportation and infrastructure improvements.

“The voters of the twelve municipalities in this District deserve a proven leader who will engage with them directly in their communities and fight on Beacon Hill to improve their lives. I am committed to meaningful engagement with and accountability to the residents of this District and the Commonwealth, and if elected, I will be a fierce advocate for governmental transparency, strengthening communities, and fairness and equality for all.”

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Becca Rausch is an elected Needham Town Meeting Member, an attorney with over a decade of experience, and a lifelong advocate for social justice, fairness, and equality. As State Senator, she will work to build a Massachusetts government that works for all of us, and will prioritize equitable access to health care, addressing opioid epidemic, and funding for public education, so we can all live our happiest, healthiest lives. Learn more about Becca’s campaign for MA State Senate in the Norfolk, Bristol & Middlesex District at www.beccarausch.com.

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