

Celebrating A Century of League Action

*We're gathered today to praise the longevity
Of the LWV but We'll do it with brevity.
Ten decades ago the League was created
By some suffragists who became elated
With the prospect of giving women a choice
To influence legislation with a united voice.*

*In the nineteen-twenties the League gave attention
To the welfare of children and war prevention
Jury duty for women became a priority –
In gaining the vote we achieved some authority.
Our numbers grew strong, our efforts courageous-
We made an impact but we weren't outrageous.*

*During the forties an essential role was given
To women in the work force while men were driven
To war, after which the League gained sensation
Endorsing foreign aid, The Marshall Plan and
the United Nations.
For better schools and child labor laws we fought –
And advances in election procedures we sought.*

*In the fifties constitutional issues became the rage.
Civil liberties and equal opportunity took center stage.
Environmental protection received our attention.
Being anti-McCarthy sure deserves mention!
Welfare of women and kids we stayed intrigued in –
And integration was a goal we all believed in.*

*In the sixties while League membership reached a new high,
assassinations and the Viet Nam War made us all cry
In a tumultuous decade we found satisfaction
By moving ahead, concentrating on action.
In Illinois we pushed for juvenile justice reform.
Due to our efforts a child abuse law was born.*

*We continued the struggle for equal opportunity
In housing and jobs, --we struggled for unity*

*In 1970 League efforts helped achieve with joy
a new Constitution for Illinois.*

*For the rest of the decade our voices were strong
Urging ERA passage, for which we all longed.*

It wasn't to be, but we fought the good fight.

We studied day-care and workfare with all our might

We strove to achieve an end to pollution-

For air and water problems we demanded solutions.

*In the eighties with vigilance we pushed for control
Of efforts for welfare reform and tough arms control.*

Reproductive rights were studied with some contention,

But our stand was important and needed attention.

The gender gap phenomenon convinced politicians

That women's voting patterns negate tradition.

In the nineties many issues commanded our zeal –

For sensible welfare reform we again did appeal.

For campaign finance reform we gain did labor

And WOW! How we worried about the ozone layer.

In the state we urged a graduated income tax-

For improved school funding our efforts weren't lax.

Children-at-risk and diversity were of concern.

And to the issue of gun control we did return.

The turn of the century saw efforts of cooperation

With PUSH to promoting the vote and battle stagnation.

With the local NAACP we covered matters of race

Racial profiling, and local issues were essential to face.

Studying immigration, reaching consensus was stressful,

While our "Persons of Impact" meetings were successful

In Illinois we said "no" to a Constitutional Convention.

League efforts helped pass McCain Feingold legislation.

*In this recent decade we experienced elation
When ERA finally passed -what jubilation!
The Supreme Court rejected our earnest appeal
To take up gerrymandering, they said "no deal."
We fought to abolish the electoral college
And studied Medicare for All gaining in knowledge.
For clean energy, jobs and income tax revision
We lobbied pursuing The League's main mission.*

*Democracy is not a spectator sport we insist
Made your vote count, as we continue to persist
In make progress. Let's hear it for our cause.
A hundred years of League action deserves applause.*

*Jane Galen
August 2020*