

## LWVSHR Program Report for 2023-24

Program Chairs Seneca Bock & Carolyn Caywood

The LWVSHR membership identified two current positions that had not been revisited for possible updating in recent memory: [Gun Law Enforcement](#) and [Regional Cooperation](#). The members also approved studies of two new issues: Local Residential Recycling and the decline of Local Journalism.

### Recommended Program

The LWVSHR Board recommends the following:

- Adopting the rewritten position on Gun Violence Prevention to replace Gun Law Enforcement;
- Retaining the [Regional Cooperation Position](#), as is;
- Adopting the new position on Local Residential Recycling;
- Concurrence with the [LWV Washington position](#) on [Local News](#);
- Retaining the remaining [LWVSHR positions](#) – [Green Space](#), [Housing](#), and [Transportation](#).

### Proposed Gun Violence Prevention Position

The League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads believes that firearm injuries and deaths are preventable. The critical challenge of firearm violence prevention is to address the cause of gun violence in the first place—the widespread access to firearms. Gun violence prevention must also include strategies to educate the public and policy makers that gun violence prevention is not just a mental health issue.

Equating gun violence to mental illness leads to the continued stigma, prejudice and fear, which may prevent some individuals from seeking the help they need. Instead, policies, laws and public information related to gun violence prevention must address risk factors for violence and unfettered access to guns.

We recognize that gun violence in America is a public health crisis, marked by deaths, injuries and related trauma that can and must be addressed through increased research and other information that is made available to the public.

We support funding and resources to raise awareness and educate the public regarding the public health impact and policy implications of ongoing gun violence in our country.

We support secure firearm storage to decrease the number of gun deaths - accidental, suicidal or homicidal, as well as decrease the number of injuries, crimes and violent assaults. By secure storage we mean that guns are stored unloaded and locked, and ammunition is locked up separately. Not only will children be safer, but the overall population, especially those at higher risk, will benefit.

We support red flag laws (Emergency Substantial Risk Orders), which use law enforcement and due process to seize and hold firearms out of the possession of those who have threatened to use them to do harm to themselves or others. These laws prevent gun suicides and injury, intimate partner violence and mass shootings.

We support prohibiting firearms in schools, public parks, public buildings, medical facilities, places of worship, and establishments serving intoxicants.

We support universal background checks and licensing for all purchasers of firearms with such licensing to require proof of training in firearm safety and proficiency.

We support the registration, using the latest technology, of all firearms and regulations requiring the immediate reporting of stolen firearms.

We support banning high-capacity magazines, auto sears and any devices that make guns more lethal and regulation of any new technology that circumvents firearms laws.

We support funding for Community Policing as a collaborative effort between the police and the community with the focus on building trust, to identify and solve community problems and reduce gun violence.

### **Proposed Local Residential Recycling Position**

The LWV-SHR supports an integrated approach to waste management that emphasizes reducing waste, reusable goods in place of single-use, efficient and environmentally safe recycling, and extended producer responsibility. To that end, recycling should be managed as an essential part of waste management and a public good that benefits all who live in or visit the region. We recommend that the cities of South Hampton Roads:

- Explore a regional approach to recycling similar to that for other solid waste, with consistent rules and costs across the region.
- Consider expanding the kinds of materials accepted for recycling, for example, organics and textiles.
- Continually test and improve ways to inform and motivate residents to reduce waste, to choose reusable goods and goods containing post-consumer recycled materials, and to recycle correctly.
- Consider how to make convenient recycling equitable onsite where people live.
- Use government purchasing contracts to specify materials that can be recycled or composted, or that contain post-consumer recycled materials to create a market for recyclables.
- Encourage the development of local businesses that can use our recycling streams, to help close the loop and reuse materials locally, creating a more circular economy.
- Advocate for extended producer responsibility laws to encourage reduced excess packaging and fewer single-use products.

### **Proposed Local News Position**

Position in Brief

The League of Women Voters of Washington believes it is the responsibility of the government to provide support for conditions under which credible local journalism can survive and thrive. The League of Women Voters of Washington defines local news as accurate, in-depth coverage of government entities, including but not limited to, city councils, county councils, county boards of commissioners, health departments, schools, and school boards.

Position

Local News (2023)

LN-1: The League supports credible and ethical local journalism, in whatever format it is published, as essential to our democracy.

LN- 2: The League of Women Voters of Washington supports efforts to ensure everyone has access to information necessary for casting an informed ballot and that credible local news sources are integral to this pursuit.

LN – 3: The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that support for the viability of local news may take a variety of forms. Control of the content must remain exclusively with the news organizations.

LN – 4: The League of Women Voters of Washington also believes media literacy and news education, including support for journalism students, is essential. These opportunities should be expanded in schools and throughout communities.

LN – 5: The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that everyone should have access to comprehensive, credible local news and that barriers to access should be removed. These barriers include, but are not limited to, geography, economic status, and education.