

Position on Good Government Standards Adopted 1981

Summary

The Missoula League of Women Voters believes that proposed changes in government(s) for Missoula must be measured against our seven standards for good government.

Background

Equitable Tax-Benefit Relations: The first paragraph of the position statement addresses this issue.

Adequate Services: The ability of the government to deliver an adequate level of services both in terms of the desires of the community and health, safety, and welfare considerations is of utmost importance. A case in point is the delivery of sewer service to those built-up areas surrounding the city which are presently served by private cesspool and septic systems and whose presence poses a serious threat to the ground water supply because of contamination and pollution.

The League is also concerned with the problems of duplication of services, a common situation when there are competing local governing bodies with overlapping jurisdiction.

Organizational Clarity: Ideally, the government form chosen for our community must delineate clear lines of authority so that the citizen knows who is responsible for what. The League also believes that it is important to separate policy-making and administrative functions. The League believes that in order to comply with the provisions of the Montana Open Meeting law the government must be structured in such a fashion as to allow the public to participate and observe while at the same time allowing public officials to have discussions with each other to bring about better decisions.

Good Opportunities for Citizen Participation and Representation: The form of government chosen for the Missoula area should include provisions which allow for constructive participation of the citizens in the processes of government, such as citizen-boards, public hearings, neighborhood associations, etc.

Each citizen should feel adequately represented by his/her elected representative. There must, however, be a balance between the number of elected representatives and their ability to function in an efficient manner as part of the governing body.

Economy and Efficiency: Taxpayers are demanding that their tax dollars be spent wisely, and any form of government proposed for Missoula should stress this goal.

Likelihood of Obtaining Qualified Personnel: Those persons, elected or appointed, responsible for providing services to the people of Missoula should be qualified for the jobs they are seeking.

Political Feasibility: The political feasibility of any proposal for governmental change in the Missoula area should be considered by the League in the process of making a decision to support or oppose such proposal.

Position

Generally, the Missoula League of Women Voters believes that all residents of the urban area should have equal access to the same services at the same rates: that rural areas should be provided with different levels of services if that is desired by their residents; and that the residents of both urban and rural areas should be taxed to pay the fair cost of the services they receive, without either group subsidizing the other.

The League believes that proposed changes in government(s) for Missoula must be measured against the following standards:

- Equitable Tax Benefit Relationships
- Adequate Services (without duplication)
- Organizational Clarity (clearcut lines of authority)
- Good Opportunities for Citizen Participation and Representation
- Economy and Efficiency
- Likelihood of Obtaining Qualified Personnel
- Political Feasibility