



# League 101

*LWVSA Membership Meeting – April 14, 2026*  
*Spokane Valley Library*

presented by Elaine Harger and Beth Pellicciotti



Our purpose today is to explore

- the foundation of the League and how we stay true to this foundation;
- the League's early definition and commitment to both nonpartisanship and advocacy; and
- in small groups, review and discuss these concepts.

In 2026, any discussions with historical roots must recognize a critical document in our nation's founding.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

*Declaration of Independence*

QUESTION TO ATTENDEES: We'd like to pose a question for your silent reflection: Do you, personally, believe that every human being deserves life and liberty, and should be able to pursue what it is that makes them happy, that realizes their potential as a human being? And do you believe that each person in this room values the ideas expressed by these words?



The League was created on Valentine's Day 1920, six months before Tennessee's legislature ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Tennessee was the 36<sup>th</sup>  
state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup>  
Amendment in August  
1920.

Cartoon: *Smithsonian Magazine*  
Elaine Weiss. The Woman's Hour.  
pp. 144-145.



The League in 1920...

*Empower  
voters!*

Educate the  
electorate

Advocate for  
public issues

*Defend  
democracy!*

...and the League today

“From the beginning...it was apparent that the legislative goals of the League would not be exclusively focused on women’s issues and that education aimed at all of the electorate was in order.”

*Carrie Chapman Chatt,  
LWV President, 1920*

*The League is political, but nonpartisan. It never supports political parties or candidates, but it does study issues, develop consensus positions and then actively works to support those positions.*

## What do you think?

QUESTION TO ATTENDEES: In 1911, nine years before the League was founded, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire occurred. In 1920, many League members would surely have been aware of the fire and the resulting legislation. Please talk about the following question with the person next to you. Had the League of Women Voters been in existence in 1911, do you think members might have discussed the proposed legislation and reached consensus to support new laws to protect factory workers from being locked into workrooms and to ensure that buildings would have exterior fire escapes?

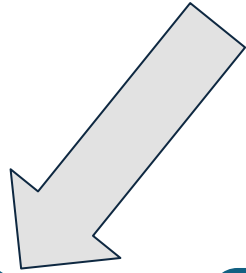


SOURCE: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle\\_Shirtwaist\\_Factory\\_fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_Shirtwaist_Factory_fire)

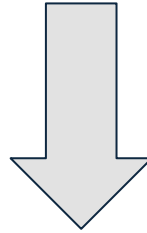
“The League is...nonpartisan. It never supports political parties or candidates, but it does study issues, develops consensus positions, and then actively works to support those positions.”

League of Women Voters Through the Decades  
<https://www.lwv.org/league-women-voters-through-decades>

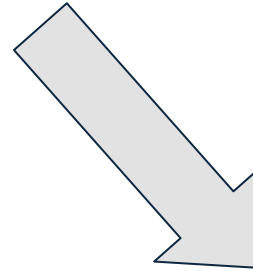
# League Basics



The League does not support political parties or candidates.



The League develops positions and applies these positions in advocacy.



League members are free to join and vote with the party of their choice.

# League Basics

The League does not  
support political  
parties or candidates.

*Members of other organizations might have their own definitions of nonpartisanship. The League's definition, however, is unambiguous, longstanding, and steadfast. In other words, our definition is used consistently, without regard to the political views of other organizations.*

# League Basics

The League develops positions and applies these positions in advocacy.

*Positions taken on matters of public policy originate in concerns voiced by League members. Positions are arrived at thorough study, extensive discussion, written reports, and adoption by consensus. Positions are meant to be durable – to withstand the test of time.*

# League Basics

League members are free to join and vote with the party of their choice.

- *League members are encouraged to be politically engaged as individuals.*
- *When League members are politically active – supporting candidates or parties – they cannot represent or speak for the League.*
- *In our League meetings and conversations, we strive to remain nonpartisan. We want to be a welcoming organization for members with different political views.*

*LWVWA takes positions and lobbies on legislation we believe to be in the public interest. Issue Chairs sometimes quote the League's position before giving testimony.*



## The 2026 Legislative Issues

### LWVWA Legislative Issues From the 2026 WA State Legislative Session

#### Democracy

Democracy Issues | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Local News and Democracy | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

#### Environment

Agriculture | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Climate Crisis & Energy | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Forests | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Waste Diversion | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

#### Social and Economic Policy

Behavioral Health | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Children's Issues | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Criminal Justice | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Early Care and Education | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

Elder Caregiving | [Weekly Update](#)

Healthcare | [Issue Overview](#)

Housing & Homelessness | [Issue Overview](#)

Immigrants | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

K-12 Education | [Weekly Update](#)

Revenue | [Issue Overview](#) | [Weekly Update](#)

SOURCE: <https://lwvwa.org/Legislative-action-newsletter>



*Impact on Issues: a guide to public policy positions of the League of Women Voters.*

This is the LWVUS listing of League principles and positions. A PDF is available online at: [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues\\_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf)



*In some of our advocacy work, we use both League principles and positions.*

*One national LWV position developed from a LWVWA study!*

PRINCIPLES.....	11
Where Do the Principles Come From? .....	11
SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS.....	12
Representative Government.....	12
International Relations .....	13
Natural Resources .....	14
Social Policy .....	15
<b>REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.....</b>	<b>18</b>
VOTING RIGHTS.....	27
Citizen's Right to Vote .....	27
DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation .....	37
THE ELECTION PROCESS.....	41
Apportionment .....	41
Redistricting .....	44
Money in Politics .....	48
Selection of the President .....	55
Voter Representation/Electoral Systems .....	57
CITIZEN RIGHTS.....	59
Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation .....	59
Individual Liberties .....	62
Public Policy on Reproductive Choices .....	64
EVALUATING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSALS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS.....	69
Constitutional Amendment Proposals .....	69
Constitutional Conventions .....	70
CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY.....	72
Congress .....	72
The Presidency .....	74
PRIVATIZATION.....	76
DIGITAL EQUITY.....	78
DECLINE OF LOCAL NEWS AND ITS IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY.....	79



# PROGRAM IN ACTION 2025-2026

Access LWVWA's listing of League principles and positions here: <https://lwvwa.org/league-positions>

## TABLE GROUP ACTIVITY

At each table is one position taken by the LWV at some point in history. As a group, read the position and discuss the following questions in order:

- Is this position of benefit to **all** people?
- Why do you think the League studied this issue, discussed it, and reached consensus to support it?
- Which of the League's principles best covers this issue?
- Think of someone you know who opposes this position. Why do they oppose it?
- Does this position violate the League's nonpartisan policy?

## GROUPS REPORT BACK

Please have someone from your group report back on how you answered the discussion questions:

- Voting Rights — Washington DC
- Election Process — presidents elected by popular vote
- Citizen Rights — reproduction
- Natural Resources — climate change
- Social Policy — immigration
- Social Policy — death penalty
- Social Policy — health care

<b>Current LWWA Positions with Background .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Government.....	23
Education.....	23
LWWA POSITIONS ON EDUCATION .....	24
Port Districts .....	25
LWWA POSITION ON PORT DISTRICTS .....	26
Privatization.....	26
LWWA POSITION ON PRIVATIZATION: The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that:.....	27
Representative Government .....	27
Election Laws and Procedures .....	29
LWWA POSITIONS ON ELECTION LAWS AND PROCEDURES (1964-67, 2003-04, 2005-07).....	31
LWWA POSITIONS ON ELECTION METHODS (2000, 2002, 2012) .....	32
Government Structure and Operations.....	32
LWWA POSITIONS ON STATE CONSTITUTION (1966-67).....	33
LWWA POSITIONS ON WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE (1973-75).....	33
LWWA POSITIONS ON REGIONAL GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES (1981) .....	33
LWWA POSITIONS ON FORMATION OF NEW COUNTIES (1997).....	33
Initiative and Referenda .....	34
LWWA POSITIONS ON INITIATIVE AND REFERENDA (1995, 2003) .....	34
Redistricting and Reapportionment.....	35
LWWA POSITIONS ON REDISTRICTING AND REAPPORTIONMENT (1955, 1958, 1959, 1975).....	36
State Tax Policy.....	36
LWWA POSITIONS ON STATE TAX POLICY: .....	37
LWWA POSITIONS ON PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS (1969, 2005).....	38
LWWA POSITIONS ON TAX STRUCTURES (1959, 1965, 2005) .....	38
LWWA POSITIONS ON GENERAL TAX EXEMPTIONS (2005).....	38
Washington State and Indian Treaty Rights .....	38
LWWA POSITION ON WASHINGTON STATE AND INDIAN TREATY RIGHTS.....	40
Transportation .....	40
LWWA POSITION ON TRANSPORTATION (2001, 2005-07, 2009):.....	41

SOURCE: <https://lwwa.org/league-positions>

The League in 1920...

*Empower  
voters!*

Educate the  
electorate

Advocate for  
public issues

*Defend  
democracy!*

...and the League today