# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

# ACTION POLICIES AND POSITIONS

*Updated 2021*

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# LEAGUE BASICS

## MISSION

The League of Women Voters of California (LWVC), a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

## PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES are concepts of government, supported by the League as a whole, that constitute the authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program.

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## VISIONS, BELIEFS, AND INTENTIONS

The goal of the League of Women Voters of California is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

We are a nonpartisan political membership organization.

**We:**

- act after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels
- build citizen participation in the democratic process and
- engage communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

**We believe in:**

- respect for individuals
- the value of diversity
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities and
- the power of collective decision making for the common good.

**We will:**

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism;
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public;
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership and
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

## Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

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# INTRODUCTION

Action positions and policies have their roots in the League's study and consensus process and serve as the basis for action/advocacy.

A League position is established after members have studied an issue and achieved consensus on policies and practices that would best serve the public interest. The League acts only within its positions; if the members have not studied and come to consensus on an issue, the League has no position and therefore does not have a stand on that issue.

Consensus Reports describing the LWVC studies are available from the LWVC office. These publications provide valuable details that aid in understanding League positions.

Shading indicates a **vertical position.** A vertical position is a position arrived at through a national, state or inter-League organization (ILO) study that has been approved for use at other levels of the League without prior permission. If a local League wants to use a position locally that is not vertical, the local League should first contact a member of the LWVC board of directors. In this folder, vertical positions are indicated by shading.

LWVC positions are divided into three areas: Government, Natural Resources, and Social Policy. LWVUS positions are stated in brief beginning on page 54. The full text of all LWVUS positions can be found in the current edition of LWVUS *Impact on Issues*.

## LWVC Action Policies

While a position is the stand of the League on a specific, often narrowly defined, public issue, LWVC action policies have been adopted after extensive review of existing state and national positions in recognition of the interdependence among public policy issues. The review identifies common themes and examines potential competition among the goals of the positions to formulate an integrated approach.

LWVC action policies in this publication address Children and Family Issues; Climate Change; Growth Management; Homelessness; Offshore Oil/Gas Exploration, Development and Production; Sustainable Communities; Waste-to-Energy Plants; and Water Privatization.

Advocacy/action includes such activities as lobbying, legislative testimony, and ballot measure campaigns. Depending on the circumstances, public statements, media campaigns, public forums, joining coalitions, and litigation may be advocacy or education. The LWVC publication *How to . . . Take Action* contains guidelines for taking local action. It is a valuable reference and should be consulted before a board makes a decision to take action on an issue.

## LWVC Program

League program consists of those governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action. The process of planning the program for League members begins with the review of existing positions and current issues by local Leagues. After member discussion, each League chooses those positions that it believes should be retained, reviewed, updated and/or deleted as well as those that the League should emphasize in the upcoming biennium.

The LWVC board of directors evaluates the responses from local Leagues along with current state issues and available financial and human resources and develops a proposed League program. The proposed program could include areas of emphasis for advocacy using existing positions, or education of members and the public, or possible development of new or updated positions through the study process. The recommended program is presented to the membership with the delegates to the LWVC convention making the final decision.

Through understanding of League positions and participation in the program planning process, League members will become more active and effective, increasing the strength of the League and affirming its grassroots nature.

# GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

## CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Adopted 1973; Updated 1976

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support state campaign finance practices for candidates and advocates of ballot measure positions that will ensure full disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures and enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.

1. Public reporting of campaign contributions and expenditures by all candidates and advocates of ballot measure positions in statewide elections.
2. Effective monitoring and enforcement.
3. Measures that will broaden the base of campaign financing, including tax credits/deductions for those who contribute to political parties, candidates, and ballot measure campaigns and some public financing to candidates for state office through an "income tax checkoff" system and direct government appropriations. Public funding measures should include realistic limits on contributions and expenditures.
4. Realistic limits on contributions by individuals and groups to candidates and ballot measure campaigns.
5. Realistic limits on the amount each candidate and ballot measure committee can spend.
6. A requirement that each candidate have one central committee responsible for coordinating, controlling, and reporting all contributions and expenditures.
7. Government provision of services for the voter, such as voter registration and distribution of information on candidates and issues.
8. Measures that will limit or shorten the length of campaigns.

## CONSTITUTION

Adopted 1957; Updated 1965-67

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures to secure an orderly and simplified State Constitution; provisions that enable the legislature to deal with state problems efficiently, flexibly and with responsibility clearly fixed; and constitutional guarantee of equal representation of all citizens in the state legislature.

1. Through the work of commissions, legislative committees, or constitutional convention. The California Constitution should:
   a. establish the framework and powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches
   b. protect the rights of citizens through a Bill of Rights, suffrage, and the power of direct legislation
   c. provide for a legislature apportioned substantially on a population basis with responsibility for decennial reapportionment clearly designated
   d. permit the legislature and other elected officials to carry out their responsibilities with flexibility, unhampered by unnecessary restrictions, but with safeguards in the public interest
   e. provide for amendment or revision of the Constitution.
2. Removal from the Constitution of provisions that inhibit flexibility of governmental action to meet changing conditions including:
   a. restrictions as to length of legislative sessions and provisions for recess
   b. highly detailed provisions including administrative and procedural detail.
3. Opposition to constitutional provisions that delineate tax sources and rates, that grant exemptions, and that earmark tax funds for specific services.

4. Improvements in orderliness and clarity, including elimination of conflicting, repetitive, and obsolete provisions.
5. Opposition to mandatory constitutional provisions for voter approval before a low rent housing project may be developed, constructed, or acquired by a public body.

## ELECTORAL PROCESS

Adopted 2019

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters.

LWVC promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible.

Whether for single or multiple winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities
- Are verifiable and auditable
- Promote access to voting
- Maximize effective votes/minimize "wasted" votes
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting
- Require the winner to receive a majority of the votes for executive and single seat offices
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail

The LWVC believes in representative government. The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g. gerrymandering).

The LWVC supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative electoral methods, as well as supporting state election laws allowing for more options at both the state and local levels. With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be available. We encourage a concerted voter education process.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM PROCESS

Adopted 1984; Updated 1999

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support citizens' right of direct legislation through the initiative and referendum process.

1. **Right to Initiative and Referendum**
   a. California should retain the direct initiative for statutes and constitutional amendments.
   b. California should retain the referendum.
   c. California should make changes to improve the initiative and referendum process.
   d. California should adopt an indirect initiative procedure, preferably as an optional alternative to the direct initiative.
2. **Drafting**
   a. Initiative sponsors should be required to submit draft proposals to an impartial and nonpartisan, official authority, such as the Legislative Analyst's Office (for statewide

offices), for a pre-circulation review of clarity/language, constitutionality/legality, and single subject.

b. The opinion resulting from the precirculation review should be made public.

c. Initiative proposals should be limited to a single subject.

d. Initiative proposals should be written in language that is precise, clear, and understandable and meets standards of readability.

e. Initiatives should include a provision providing for an automatic review or expiration of the measure, as appropriate.

**f.** Initiatives with provisions that would require funding should specify the sources or method(s) of providing the funding.

3. **Title and Summary**

The title and summary should be written by an impartial and nonpartisan official authority, such as the Legislative Analyst's Office (for statewide measures).

4. **Signature Gathering**

a. If appropriate security safeguards are in place, Internet and/or other electronic technology should be allowed for signature gathering.

**b.** California should have a system of registration and training for signature gatherers**.**

5. **Qualification**

a. Requirements should be retained for:

1) direct initiative statute—valid signatures numbering 5 percent of the total vote for all candidates for governor in the last gubernatorial election, 150 days to collect signatures

2) direct initiative constitutional amendment—valid signatures numbering 8 percent of the total vote for all candidates for governor in the last gubernatorial election,150 days to collect signatures

3) referendum on a legislative statute—valid signatures numbering 5percent of the total vote for all candidates for governor in the last gubernatorial election, 90 days to collect signatures.

b. The filing fee should reflect costs of processing initiative and referendum proposals.

c. No requirement for geographic distribution should be imposed.

d. Solicitation of signatures and campaign funds in the same mailing should be allowed.

e. The standard to qualify an initiative constitutional amendment should be higher than that for an initiative statute.

6. **Campaign**

a. Realistic limits should be imposed on contributions by individuals and groups to initiative and referendum campaigns.

b. Realistic limits should be imposed on expenditures by individuals and groups to initiative and referendum campaigns.

c. There should be provision for free time for radio and TV information programs for initiative campaigns.

d. No public financing should be provided for initiative and referendum campaigns.

e. The legislature should conduct public hearings on initiative and referendum proposals around the state, with adequate public notice.

f. Ballot pamphlet analyses of initiative and referendum measures should be written for the reading level of the average citizen.

g. The ballot label and ballot pamphlet should clearly indicate the effect of a yes vote and a no vote.

7. **Disclosure**

a. Sponsors of an initiative or referendum and organizations that form a committee to support or oppose a measure should be required to be listed by name in the ballot pamphlet, in mailings, and in advertisements.

b. Principal contributors to an initiative or referendum campaign should be required to be listed by name in the ballot pamphlet, in mailings, and in advertisements.

c. Initiative and referendum committees

should be required to use names that reflect their true economic or special interest.

8. **Election**
   a. Voting on initiatives should take place at primary and general elections but not at special elections.
   b. An initiative statute, or a legislative statute appearing on the ballot as a referendum, should be approved by a simple majority of those voting on the measure to take effect.
   c. The standard to pass an initiative constitutional amendment should be higher than a simple majority vote.
   d. An initiative statute or constitutional amendment that imposes a new requirement for passage of future initiatives should meet the same requirement.
   e. An initiative statute or constitutional amendment that requires a supermajority vote for passage of future related issues should be required to receive the same supermajority vote approval for its passage.
   f. State initiative measures should apply to the entire state, not only to those political subdivisions in which they are approved.
   g. An initiative should not be allowed to provide for different outcomes depending upon the percentage of votes cast in its favor.
9. **Post-Election**
   a. Under limited circumstances, the legislature, without approval by the voters, should be allowed to amend a statute adopted by initiative. Circumstances could include that the amendments are consistent with the original intent of the initiative or are made after a waiting period.
   b. Approval by the voters should be required to amend constitutional amendments adopted by initiative.
   c. If two or more initiatives with conflicting provisions pass at the same election, the initiative receiving the greatest number of votes should be enacted.
   d. Initiative proposals that do not win voter approval should be allowed to appear on subsequent ballots without restriction, if they again meet qualification requirements.
10. **Legal Aspects**
   a. The definition of "single subject" pertaining to initiatives should be redefined to ensure stricter interpretation and stricter enforcement.
   b. Constitutional challenges to voter-approved initiatives being reviewed in the state courts should be heard by a three-judge panel rather than a single judge.
11. **Principles**

In evaluating proposed changes to various stages of the initiative and referendum processes, the following principles should be considered as they apply to all participants in the process. While these principles reinforce each other, they may at times be in tension. In such decisions, the principles listed as critical should be given heavier weight.

Critical principles:

a. **Accessibility** – All interested parties can give input into the process.
b. **Accountability** – All parties abide by California laws, and the laws are enforced adequately and in a timely way.
c. **Clarity** – The process and the content of initiatives and referendums are understandable.
d. **Integrity** – The process is sound and consistent with ethical principles and practices.
e. **Transparency** – The maximum amount of information about all aspects of the process is publically available in a timely manner.

Also important:

f. **Compromise** – The initiative and referendum process allows for negotiation and cooperation by interested parties.
g. **Deliberative Process** – The process allows sufficient time and opportunity for discussion and collaboration.

h. **Impartiality** – The process reflects the rights of individuals and groups without partiality or bias.

i. **Respect for Rights** – No individual or group can restrict the rights of any participant in the initiative and referendum process.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Adopted 1981

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support an efficient, effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority among the levels of government with accountability to the public.

1. A rational organization of powers and functions of the several levels of government:
   a. based on economic efficiency, administrative effectiveness, political accountability, and fiscal equity
   b. determined by a process of review and recommendation that provides for both local and statewide representation
   c. providing for consolidation of functions between and among levels of government to deal with area-wide problems, and to achieve cost savings that will not adversely affect, and wherever possible will improve, the quality of service.
2. Flexibility for local governments when administering state authorized and/or funded programs to determine needs, priorities, and the use of funds, consistent with state program objectives.
3. Clear definition of legislative intent in state funded programs, including any provision for review or termination.
4. Procedures for state review and local accountability that are based on:
   a. periodic review and evaluation of regulations
   b. reasonable reporting requirements;
   c. appropriate, coordinated, and non-duplicative accounting and auditing procedures.
5. Applications for federal funds that are consistent with state and local priorities, when not in conflict with national goals; and that consider the dependability and continuity of funding.
6. Easy identification of all federal funds in state and local budgets.
7. Active participation by the public in state and local government, which entails the right and responsibility to be informed, to be heard, and to be involved not only in, but beyond elections; and which requires that officials make decisions openly and that they provide broadly publicized, convenient opportunities for participation by the public in the process

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Adopted 1998

**POSITION IN BRIEF**: Support a public library system as a basic community service with a long-term, assured, stable and adequate funding source.

Support access by all persons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society.

1. Increase recognition of the essential nature of public libraries in a democratic society:
   a. Provision of library services for and to all potential users.
   b. Provision of adequate hours of service including evening and weekend hours.
   c. Provision of library resources in keeping with new ideas and technological

advances, with an easy to use retrieval system.

d. Provision of adequate professional and nonprofessional paid staff.

2. Promote measures to insure the efficiency and economy of library services:

a. Consolidation of library functions or systems to achieve cost effectiveness that would not adversely affect the quality of service.

b. Continue the use of volunteers to supplement paid staff.

3. Support improvement of library facilities to increase accessibility.

4. Support long-term, assured, stable and adequate funding for public libraries.

a. Public libraries should be funded by government.

b. Encourage private contributions to augment library facilities and services.

## REDISTRICTING

Adopted 1988; Amended 2007

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and in the house of representatives with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny.

Support an independent commission as the preferred redistricting body.

1. The redistricting process, regardless of who has responsibility for redistricting, should include:

a. specific timelines for the steps leading to adoption of the redistricting plan

b. public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption

c. an automatic nonjudicial backup procedure in the event of deadlock

d. a requirement that any redistricting plan drawn by the legislature be adopted by more than a simple majority vote.

2. The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, regardless of who has responsibility for redistricting,

a. should include:

1) substantially equal population

2) geographic contiguity

3) protection from diluting the voting strength of a racial or linguistic minority

b. should not allow:

1) the goal of protecting incumbents

2) preferential treatment of one political party

c. to the extent possible, standards should also include:

1) respect for boundaries of cities and counties

2) preservation and protection of “communities of interest.”

3. Responsibility for redistricting preferably should be vested in an independent special commission, with membership that includes citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and minority group interests.

4. A legislative remedy should be provided so that all persons are represented by a state senator for whom they have had an opportunity to vote

## STATE AND LOCAL FINANCES

Adopted 1969; Updated 1975; New Positions 1976, 1977, 1981, 1995

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures to ensure revenues both sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services; that contribute to a system of public finance that emphasizes equity and fair sharing of the tax burden as well as adequacy; that include long range finance methods that meet current and future needs while taking into account the cumulative impact of public debt.

Support a process that maintains statutory authority over tax sources, rates and tax expenditures; that makes limited use of direct voting by the public on revenue measures; and that allows adoption of revenue and finance measures by a simple majority vote.

Support the distribution of revenue sources between state and local governments in a manner to ensure adequate, equitable and flexible funding of public programs based on the responsibilities and requirements of each and that encourages accountability.

Support an equitable, broad-based local property tax, easy and economical to administer, producing adequate revenue, with limitations on the types of services it funds.

Support assessment practices and policies that are equitable, accurate, easy to understand and well publicized, with like properties treated uniformly.

**State and Local Government Finance System**

1. To ensure a system of taxation that provides revenue sufficient to meet the changing needs of the people of the state through adoption of taxes, rates, rate schedules, revenue and finance measures that:
   a. meet tests of treating equal tax circumstances equally (horizontal equity) and promoting a progressive tax structure (vertical equity)
   b. provide adequate revenue at the time of adoption as well as contributing to a system with good cyclical adequacy and that grows with the economy (elasticity)
   c. a preference for measures that:
      1) contribute to the flexibility of the system
      2) are accompanied by analyses of potential economic effects that are available to the governing body and general public prior to adoption
      3) simplify the tax system and/or provide for efficient collection and distribution of revenue
      4) facilitate accountability to the public by the unit of government that collects the revenue and that delivers services
      5) make provision for persons unable to pay fees or charges levied on essential community wide services.

**Adequacy of Revenue**

2. To ensure adequacy of revenue by:
   a. retention of existing sources of revenue with bases as broad as possible consistent with fairness;
   b. a variety of revenue sources available to local governments including a wide range of local taxes that meet tests of equity and adequacy and that take into account flexibility, economic effects, simplicity, efficiency and accountability
   c. local revenue sources including fees, with provision for persons unable to pay fees or charges levied on essential community

wide services; and benefit assessments, when benefits accrue primarily to those paying and that contain a protest and appeals process that is simple, clear, speedy, widely publicized, in which the appellant has access to assessment records necessary to prepare an appeal

d. use by local governments of tax base sharing; state and federal assistance; and cost saving management techniques

e. state reimbursement to local governments for revenue losses due to state imposed exemptions

f. a state imposed resource severance tax.

**Equity**

3. To ensure fair sharing of the tax burden by:
   a. acceptance of ability to pay as the primary but not exclusive criterion for distributing the tax burden, with emphasis on income-based taxes
   b. tax expenditures measures that include provision for mandatory, periodic review and justification by the legislature
   c. a preference for tax expenditures that:
      1) contribute to tax equity
      2) are in the interest of the general public and not just a specific group
      3) provide social benefits that significantly outweigh the increased tax burden to others
      4) simplify tax administration
   d. exemption from the sales tax of food, prescription drugs and other goods purchased by prescription, baseline utility costs, repair and services
   e. consideration of expanding the sales tax base to include carefully defined nonessential food items, such as candy, and admissions to amusements
   f. responsibility for funding health and welfare services by the program-mandating level of government
   g. collection by the state of any income or sales tax
   h. distribution of the local portion of sales tax revenue by a formula that takes into account population, and local and regional needs, as well as point of sale
   i. allocation of other funds from the state to local governments on the basis of population; environmental, economic, and/or social impact; need for service, and revenue raising ability.

**Flexibility of Revenue**

4. To ensure flexibility of revenue by:
   a. legislative control of state tax sources and rates
   b. establishment of a general framework for local revenues by the legislature
   c. minimal use of direct voting by citizens on tax sources and rates
   d. governing body adoption of user fees and fine schedules
   e. a simple majority vote by the public or the governing body to adopt, repeal or change a revenue or finance measure
   f. public program and funding priorities that give primary consideration to meeting the basic needs of the general population, attaining program objectives economically, and using procedures that promote flexibility and permit diversity of services
   g. selective reductions within and among programs rather than across-the-board cutbacks when funding is reduced
   h. each fund or tax earmarked for a specific purpose containing an automatic sunset date and provisions for mandatory government body review and reauthorization
   i. adoption of designated earmarked funds and taxes only in those situations where social benefit significantly outweighs the loss of flexibility
   j. earmarking in all cases statutory rather than in the state constitution
   k. periodic review of the allocation formula for tidelands oil revenue to accommodate changing needs
   l. a continuing search for better ways to finance government.

**State and Local Government Processes**

5. To ensure flexible government processes by:

a. adoption of budgets, appropriations, taxes, other revenue sources, and changes in rates and schedules by a simple majority vote of the governing body
b. repeal of or changes in statutory tax expenditures by a simple majority vote
c. mid-budget appropriations adjustments through joint action of the executive and legislature or governing body so that checks and balances are retained
d. consideration of options such as two-year budget cycles and budget formats that emphasize performance and outcomes.

**Long-Term Debt Financing**

6. To ensure provision for long-term debt financing of certain capital projects by:

a. approval of bond issues that take into account:
   1) the current bond rating status of the state or local jurisdiction, including cumulative impacts and how the adoption of additional debt will impact ability to finance future projects
   2) the viability and comparative cost of other means of finance such as "pay-as-you-go," leasing and lease-purchase
   3) how the bond issue fits within debt management and infrastructure plans, statutory caps on bonded indebtedness or recommended debt ratios (levels of debt service within a budget)
   4) current urgent needs, such as repairs following a disaster, that may not fall within adopted infrastructure plans
b. use of bond financing for:
   1) construction of capital projects;
   2) purchase of facilities for public use
   3) repair and retrofitting of existing public facilities and structures when other means of financing are not available
c. provision for voter approval of state and local bond measures by a simple majority vote.

**Property Tax Equity**

7. To ensure property tax equity by:
   a. the requirement that all types of property subject to the property tax bear a fair share of the property tax burden
   b. separation of residential from commercial/industrial properties for taxing or assessment purposes in order to achieve fair sharing of the tax burden
   c. provision for property tax relief for those on low or fixed incomes, especially the elderly.

**Property Tax Base**

8. To ensure a broad property tax base by requiring that:
   a. the property tax be levied on both land and improvements
   b. tax-exempt properties pay for services directly rendered them.

**Property Tax Uses**

9. To ensure use of the property tax primarily for those services directly related to property such as police, fire protection, streets, water, sewerage, and street lighting; for such other local services as libraries, parks, recreation, the general administrative costs of local government and public schools.

**Property Tax Assessments**

10. To ensure sound assessment practices and policies that provide:
    a. an adequate budget for the assessor's office to permit accurate appraisals, a staff of qualified personnel required to take ongoing training, and use of modern appraisal tools whenever the cost can be justified
    b. regular, frequent reappraisals
    c. the use of market value as the standard for assessments with effective alternatives to preserve agricultural land and open space;
    d. an appeals process that is simple, clear, speedy and widely publicized and in which the appellant has access to the assessment records necessary to prepare an appeal
    e. uniformity throughout the state.

## VOTING RIGHTS

Adopted 1972; Reviewed 1986

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures that will protect every citizen's right to vote and ensure government's responsibility to protect this right through regulations and procedures that encourage an informed and active electorate.

1. California should retain voter registration in order to identify the voter and facilitate orderly elections.
2. There should be a system of permanent registration.
3. There should be ease of registration and re-registration.
4. Citizenship, age, and residency should be reasonable requirements of registration.
5. Election services that safeguard the voting process should be maintained.
6. Persons not literate should be provided the opportunity to vote and permitted to have assistance. Non English-speaking citizens should be provided the opportunity to vote.
7. The voter should be provided with relevant, accurate and easily understandable information on elections, election issues, and candidates.
8. There should be local options in implementing the State Election Code, but the state should take a stronger role in encouraging the facilitation of registration and voting.

# NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

Action Policies are compilations of LWVC and LWVUS positions on specific topics. They can be applied in the same way as all positions. See:


- the Climate Change Action Policy on page 41
- the Growth Management Action Policy on page 44
- the Offshore Oil/Gas Exploration, Development, And Production Action Policy on page 47
- the Sustainable Communities Action Policy on page 49
- the Waste-To-Energy Plants: Assessment Guidelines on page 52
- the Water Privatization Checklist on page 53.


## AGRICULTURE

Adopted 1983

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support policies that recognize agricultural land as a limited resource that must be preserved for the economic and physical well-being of California and the nation. Appropriate agricultural land should be identified and its longterm protection should be based on regulatory and incentive programs that include comprehensive planning, zoning measures and other preservation techniques. State policy that affects agriculture should ensure the conservation of soil and water resources through incentives coupled with penalties for noncompliance.

### Agricultural Land Preservation

1. Appropriate land should be identified and held for agriculture.
2. The identification of agricultural land should be based on criteria that includes an available water supply, the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics and soil factors, and the threat of urbanization.
3. The state should provide a policy, plan and guidelines for the long-term protection of agricultural land that require:
   a. comprehensive planning;
   b. a mandatory agricultural element in general plans;
   c. agricultural zoning;
   d. citizen participation.
4. Techniques for preserving agricultural land should include tax relief, tax incentives, and "less-than-fee" purchase of development interests in farmland.

### Soil and Water Conservation

Soil and water conservation are essential elements in land management practices.

1. Financial and technical assistance should require best management practices for soil and water conservation.
2. Incentives should be provided to promote soil and water conservation.
3. Water conservation must be a condition placed on the delivery and use of water for agriculture. *
4. California should have a statewide program for groundwater management. *
5. Interbasin transfer of water should be available only after conservation measures have been implemented. *

*See LWVC Water position, pages 24-25

## AIR QUALITY

Adopted 1971; Updated 1973

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures to establish air quality standards that will protect the public health and welfare, and the development of effective enforcement and implementation procedures at each level of government to attain these standards.

1. The state agency in California responsible for air pollution control should be strengthened and sufficiently funded to:
   a. set air quality standards that may be stricter than national standards
   b. establish and regulate uniform policies and guidelines for administering air pollution control at all jurisdictional levels of government in the state
   c. support lower levels of government in the enforcement of laws and regulations needed to achieve air quality standards
   d. sponsor a program of educating and instructing the public in aspects of air pollution that can be ameliorated by citizens' activities and participation.
2. The cost of converting industry from polluting to non-polluting practices should be borne primarily by industry with the help of such incentives as:
   a. low-interest government loans
   b. government grants for research
   c. favorable depreciation allowance on capital investment in control equipment.
3. Air pollution control should be administered by air basin.
4. A well-developed mass transit system designed to reduce automobile traffic should be established in all metropolitan areas of the state.
5. The Highway User's Fund should be used for transportation-related services such as smog control and transit.

## ENERGY

Adopted 1978; Updated 1980, 2006; Amended 2007

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** The League supports development of a state energy policy that will ensure reliability of energy resources and protection of the environment and public health and safety, at reasonable customer rates, giving primary consideration to conservation and energy efficiency. State government should provide an efficient, coordinated energy administrative structure with open transparent procedures.

**Resource Adequacy**

1. The state regulatory and planning agencies, as well as the energy providers, should give primary consideration to conservation and energy efficiency. State regulation and planning should also address the critical need for demand-side management of peak power requirements including real-time pricing.
2. In acquiring new electric resources, major additional factors to consider include the:
   a. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
   b. development and deployment of renewable resources
   c. contribution to the diversity of the resource mix
   d. availability at times of peak power demand
   e. level of support for base load power requirements
   f. protection of public health and safety.

**Integrated Energy Planning**

3. The state should implement an integrated energy planning process that:

a. forecasts needs for transmission line and other energy infrastructure, including additional generation, storage, and investments in energy efficiency and demand-side management
b. establishes consistent statewide procedures for the set-aside of land that will be needed for future transmission corridors and other associated energy infrastructure, in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements
c. streamlines procedures so that siting and permitting can be accomplished in a timely way.

**Statewide Standards**

4. Statewide standards should be set for renewable resource development, demandside management procurements and reserve requirements.
5. These standards should be applied to all load-serving entities, including:
   a. municipal utilities
   b. electric service providers
   c. rural electric cooperative, with accommodation made for any problems that might arise for small and/or rural providers.

**Organizational Structure**

6. The energy planning and regulatory process should be based on coordination of functions, as well as collaboration among the existing agencies. The regulatory responsibilities (i.e., rate-setting and rulemaking) should be separated from planning and permitting functions.

**Roles of the State**

7. The state should regulate and oversee in-state energy facilities, including Liquified Natural Gas terminals, through permitting, licensing, and enforcement of regulations for in-state and out-of-state providers.
8. The state should:
   a. conduct forecasts to assure resource adequacy and system reliability
   b. use economic/market and other incentives to foster renewable energy, conservation, demand-side management, and greenhouse gas reductions
   c. administer a public-interest research and development program.

**Regional Planning**

9. Decisions about implementation of the energy planning process should be made on a region-wide basis through a mechanism that incorporates participation by local governments.

**Roles of Local Governments**

10. Local governments should have responsibility to inform their citizens about developments in regional energy planning and to communicate local concerns to the regional planners.
11. Local governments should promote energy conservation, especially in relation to building codes, transportation, resource recovery, and public information.

**Transparency in Decision-making**

12. Greater transparency in energy policy decision-making should be promoted by:
    a. effective noticing
    b. use of open meetings and workshops, community outreach, including funding for meetings
    c. extensive use of communications technologies.
13. Given the importance of public participation, agencies should be required to use plain language in all communications, proceedings, and publications.

**Direct Access**

14. Any direct-access (choice of a provider) policy should not result in additional costs to the remaining core customers.
15. Customers who leave the regulated system for a direct-access account should be required to pay a fair share of the costs their utility has incurred to serve them.
16. Customers who have left a regulated utility for a direct-access account and later wish to return, should be required to compensate for

any negative effects their return will have on the regulated system.

**Interrelationship of Energy and Water**

17. Energy agencies and utilities should develop programs that will help the water sector reduce its very large consumption of electric power and fossil fuels.
18. Information about the impacts of water conveyance, treatment, and end use, including irrigation pumping, should be disseminated to the public.
19. Energy policy should recognize the important interrelationship between water use and energy use. Practices such as universal metering and economic incentives to shift load to off-peak hours should be considered.
20. Recognizing that a substantial portion of California's economy is based on agriculture, measures to reduce water-intensive crops and landscape plantings should be considered.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Adopted 1986 and 1987

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support comprehensive measures to provide maximum protection to human health and the environment from the adverse effects of hazardous materials, including pesticides. An integrated approach should be taken to prevent harmful exposures through soil, surface and ground water contamination, bioaccumulation, air pollution and direct contact. Hazardous materials planning should promote pollution prevention. All levels of government share responsibility for preventing exposures.

**Public Information**

1. The public has the right to know the potentially harmful effects of materials they encounter in the home, workplace and community. Citizens should be included in the planning and decision-making processes of hazardous material management. Adequate funding to promote citizen participation should be available.

**Regulatory Structure**

2. State government should establish an integrated regulatory structure clearly delineating jurisdictional and agency responsibilities for the safe production, use, transportation, treatment, storage, disposal and cleanup of hazardous materials. It should include adequate budget and staff and be accountable to the public.

**Planning**

3. Hazardous materials planning should promote source reduction, recycling and resource recovery, and regional solutions to hazardous waste disposal. Plans should establish:
    a. renewable permitting processes
    b. reporting requirements for industry inventories, spills, leaks and releases
    c. systems for collecting and disseminating data with provisions for public access
    d. stringent siting, design and operating standards for facilities
    e. stringent licensing, monitoring, operating and enforcement standards for vehicles
    f. provisions for managing the hazardous waste disposal of households and small businesses
    g. provisions for evaluating the cumulative impacts of hazardous materials in an area
    h. frequent monitoring and effective enforcement procedures.

**Regulations**

4. Hazardous materials regulations should include:
    a. a timetable for implementation

b. incentive and inspection programs coupled with penalties to encourage compliance and discourage illegal practices
c. provisions for educating the public and industry
d. coordination of emergency response procedures
e. mechanisms to arbitrate conflicts between governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies.

**Financing**

5. State government should have the financial capabilities to provide for testing priority substances and should use interim measures to limit exposures until health-based standards are adopted.

To assess risks, agencies at appropriate levels of government should:

a. establish science-based priorities
b. use the best available data
c. include objective peer review
d. expand and coordinate environmental monitoring for exposure assessment
e. provide for periodic updating and review of the data.

**Standards**

6. Statewide standards should emphasize the prevention of harmful exposures.

State and local standards may exceed federal standards where appropriate for the jurisdiction. All standards should be monitored and enforced by the appropriate level of government. Specifically, standards should:

a. establish maximum contamination levels for hazardous materials allowed in the air, in surface and groundwater, in soil and as residue on food and feed crops
b. prevent degradation of existing clean air, surface and groundwater and soil
c. prohibit further degradation of already polluted areas
d. require that hazardous wastes be treated to level of Best Available Control Technology standards before disposal
e. at a minimum, site cleanup should meet standards of existing law.

**Risks**

7. Health-based standards to manage the risks of hazardous materials, including pesticides, should include a margin of safety above the assessed risk, and be periodically reviewed and updated. Any variance or exemption should be based strictly on the necessity of the substance or practice and be of limited duration. Risk management criteria to implement standards should give:

a. maximum consideration to the cost of inaction to the public in terms of short- and long-term health and environmental effects, and to the likelihood of involuntary exposures
b. major consideration to both availability of existing technology to control and test substances and the need to force technological innovation to reduce risks
c. moderate consideration to the effects on the state's economy and on employment
d. limited consideration to the cost to government and to commercial interest
e. minimal consideration to the effects on the price of a product.

**Economic Compensation**

8. State government should administer an accessible expeditious system to compensate individuals for economic damages caused by involuntary exposure to hazardous materials. The system should:

a. be financed by private and public monies
b. preserve the right of individuals to seek further compensation through the tort system
c. preserve the right of the state to seek reimbursement for claims paid.

**Legal Recourse**

9. For personal injury allegedly caused by hazardous materials the tort system should:

a. permit plaintiffs access to full compensation
b. admit valid scientific studies into evidence
c. require full disclosure about the effects of substances

d. hold commercial handlers of specified substances to a standard of strict liability.

**Management**

10. Safe management of hazardous materials, and compliance with regulations, and liability are costs of doing business. Industry should consider the long rather than the short-term costs. Consumers and taxpayers must expect some costs to be passed on to them. The state should use incentives and disincentives as a management tool to minimize adverse exposures to hazardous materials. Specifically, the state should:
    a. recover its regulatory costs primarily through taxes on industrial users and producers, and through license and permit fees, penalties and fines
    b. provide financial and technical assistance for research on resource recovery and recycling
    c. equalize tax treatment and fee structure between virgin and secondary materials, with mandatory periodic review and justification
    d. help local governments develop and exercise hazardous materials management functions by increased financial aid for research, technical assistance and data collection
    e. hold commercial handlers to a standard of strict, joint and several liability for the cleanup of hazardous pollution
    f. implement, enforce and monitor regulations to prevent exposures and to enable consideration of some limits on future liability for environmental exposures on a case-by-case basis.

## LAND USE

Adopted 1975

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support state land use planning that recognizes land as a resource as well as a commodity. The state should establish guidelines and standards for land areas of more than local concern.

Decision for these areas should be made at the lowest level of government feasible but should be subject to state review. Citizens must have a meaningful participation in land use planning and regulation.

**Policies**

1. State policies, guidelines, and standards should be developed for land areas such as fragile or historic lands, renewable resource lands (including agricultural lands), natural hazard lands, and land impacted by public investment.

**Planning**

2. State land use planning should be part of an integrated overall state planning effort. The state land use plan should coordinate plans and policies of local and regional agencies, maximizing local decision making. Environmental, social and economic impact statements should be required on major developments, public and private. The state government should help local governments develop and exercise land use management functions by increased state financial aid for research, technical assistance, and data collection.

**Arbitration**

3. Mechanisms should be established to arbitrate conflicts between governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies in order to implement land use planning. The state should assume authority for land use planning and control where local governments fail to regulate land use of local concern.

**Regional Planning**

4. The state government should encourage formation of sub-state regional bodies with authority for land use planning and regulation in matters of more than local concern.

**Local Planning**

5. Local land use planning should be utilized as a means to determine how local communities should change and develop. General plans

should be used as a basis for zoning and other planning decisions at the local level. Land use decisions should relate to and protect the overall quality of the environment. Local government should plan for the preservation of open space and provide for adequate parks and recreation.

**Regulation**

6. In land use planning and regulation, government must provide for involvement of citizens in the earliest planning and regulatory stages and throughout the process, adequate funding of the public information process, and development of mechanisms to minimize conflict of interest on the part of persons who make land use decision

## SOLID WASTE

Adopted 1973

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures to ensure environmentally sound and efficient solid waste management, to reduce the generation of wastes, to encourage resource recovery, and to increase the demand for secondary materials.

**Waste Management**

1. The state should establish standards for collection and standards for regulations for disposal.
2. The state should provide financial assistance to local governments for disposal facilities.
3. The state should provide technical and financial assistance for research and development of improved collection and disposal methods.
4. Local government should be concerned primarily with collection and disposal, subject to state standards and regulations.

**Regional Solutions**

5. Regional solutions for solid waste disposal and recycling should be encouraged.

**Resource Recovery**

6. The primary goal of recycling is to forestall depletion of nonrenewable natural resources.
7. Tax treatment should be equalized between virgin and secondary materials.
8. The state should adopt specifications for products of reclaimed materials and should increase its own purchase of such materials.
9. The state should provide supplemental financing for recycling facilities.

**Public Education**

All levels of government should encourage and support education on these issues.

## TRANSPORTATION

Adopted 1981; Revised 1985; New Position 1991

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a transportation system to move people and goods that includes a variety of transportation modes, with emphasis on increased public transportation services and other viable alternatives to reduce vehicle miles traveled; is efficient, convenient, and cost effective; is safe and secure; serves all segments of the population and diverse geographic needs; minimizes harmful effects on the environment; is integrated with land use; and is supported by extensive public education.

1. Transportation and land use planning should be integrated to promote reduced vehicle miles traveled through a jobs/housing balance and requirements that land use development facilitate use of transit and other alternatives to single occupant vehicles.
2. Planning for transportation should promote:
   a. strategies to influence travel behavior, such as fees, taxes and tolls, combined

with mitigation measures for low income persons

b. alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel, such as high occupancy vehicle lanes, expanded transit, car/van pools and bicycle lanes

c. other strategies to improve traffic flow, such as flextime and telecommuting

d. project evaluation processes that include early and informed public participation, analysis of alternative routes and modes, analysis of costs and benefits of each alternative, and consideration of consistency with regional and state transportation systems.

3. Transportation funding should come from all levels of government, but regional and local levels should have maximum flexibility to select the modes and projects on which to spend allocated funds. User fees and other revenues derived from transportation-related sources should be designated for transportation uses, including use of highway users' taxes for transportation-related services such as smog control and transit. A variety of other funding methods are appropriate, including general funds, sales tax revenues and private sources such as developer fees. All funding should be evaluated in terms of equitable sharing of transportation costs, effect on travel behavior and indirect economic impacts.

4. Government responsibility includes:

a. provision for early and informed public participation in the planning process

b. cooperation and coordination among agencies and between different levels of government

c. maintenance of existing transportation systems.

5. The state should be responsible for setting statewide standards and for planning on a statewide level with provision for a strong regional role.

6. Regional decision making should include extensive local input.

## WATER

Adopted 1959; Updated 1961, 1967, 1971, 1979

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures that promote the management and development of water resources in ways that are beneficial to the environment with emphasis on conservation and high standards of water quality that are appropriate for the intended use.

**Planning and Management of Water Resources**

**1.** Support measures that:

a. coordinate water resource planning with land use planning and provide for future needs without encouraging growth

b. protect the natural environment in areas of both water origin and water use

c. reserve stream flows for protection of fish and wildlife habitat and other in-stream uses

d. preserve wild and scenic rivers

e. encourage off-stream storage; discourage additional on-stream dams

f. provide for assessment of economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of water projects

g. discourage water contracting and marketing policies that build up demand and establish rigid patterns of distribution and use

h. encourage a variety of water supply sources with emphasis on nonstructural alternatives

i. develop and maintain a statewide inventory of ground and surface water supplies and a centralized database to evaluate current and potential needs, demands, and uses

j. require that documents present clear, concise information, readily available to the public.

**Water Quality Control**

2. Support measures that:
   a. give state and regional boards responsibility for setting water quality standards that may be higher than minimum federal standards
   b. give state and regional water quality control boards sufficient authority and adequate budget and staff to establish and enforce water quality standards
   c. promote coordination of regional water quality control boards with other agencies concerned with both water quality and quantity.

**Surface and Groundwater Supplies**

3. To ensure protection and efficient use of groundwater and surface water supplies, the state should:
   a. modify water rights law to facilitate coordinated management and use of surface and groundwater resources
   b. develop and enforce policies, standards, and guidelines to coordinate basin-wide groundwater and surface water management
   c. identify local, basin, or regional groundwater management areas
   d. set and enforce standards for groundwater management with local, basin, or regional development and implementation of plans tailored to the carrying capacity and characteristics of each basin
   e. review management plans periodically to assure compliance with state mandated policies, standards, and guidelines
   f. have a statewide program for groundwater management.

**Fiscal Objectives**

4. Support measures that:
   a. require fish and wildlife enhancement, flood control, and recreation costs be borne by the general taxpayer
   b. require other costs be paid by the water and power users
   c. encourage water pricing policies that reflect development and delivery costs
   d. protect low- or fixed-income water users by lifeline rates
   e. encourage flexible water contracts to reflect costs and benefits more accurately.

**Conservation**

5. Support measures that:
   a. encourage conservation by all categories of water users through pricing policies, technical assistance, metering, education, and changes in water rights law
   b. require rationing in emergency situations only
   c. encourage the use of reclaimed water for power plant cooling, groundwater recharge, agricultural, and landscape irrigation
   d. require water conservation as a condition placed on the delivery and use of water for agriculture
   e. require implementation of conservation measures before interbasin transfer of water should be made available.

**Protection of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and San Francisco Bay Estuary Ecosystem**

6. Support measures that:
   a. increase water conservation and promote wastewater reclamation to minimize reliance on water exported through and around the Delta
   b. foster federal and state coordination and cooperation over all Delta operation and management
   c. require federal and state entities to abide by high water quality standards
   d. set limits on the amount of water to be exported through or around the Delta;
   e. require strong, binding environmental safeguards as a part of any cross-Delta transfer system.

# SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

Action Policies are compilations of LWVC and LWVUS positions on specific topics. They can be applied in the same way as all positions. See:

- The Children and Family Issues Action Policy on page 39.
- The Homelessness Action Policy on page 46.

## CHILDCARE

**Adopted 1989**

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support state and local policies, legislation and programs that meet the need for accessible, affordable, and quality childcare.

**Policy**

1. Support state and local policies committed to the following principles:
   a. all children are entitled to safe, nurturing care
   b. caring for children is a societal as well as a family responsibility
   c. quality childcare responsive to diverse needs of children and their families should be available to all socio-economic groups on an ability to pay basis
   d. job- protected maternity and parental leaves are highly desirable
   e. stable funding is a necessary component of policy.

**Administration**

2. Support a state administrative structure which provides for optimum effectiveness in implementing childcare policies, programs, and services by meeting the following criteria:
   a. the welfare of the child is the primary focus;
   b. policy is effectively implemented
   c. private and public programs are efficiently coordinated
   d. responsible agencies work together cooperatively and effectively
   e. the administrative staff has training in child development
   f. responsible agencies are effective advocates for childcare and are responsive to public concerns.

**Availability/Accessibility**

3. Support measures that ensure availability of accessible, quality childcare that is responsive to diverse needs of children and their families.

   Support measures that:
   a. provide incentives and encouragement for private providers and employers to expand the supply of childcare, e.g. simplify the regulatory process without lowering standards; provide loans for startup costs; offer tax breaks; assure reasonable insurance rates; act as a model employer by offering childcare services and benefits to state employees
   b. facilitate and expand childcare programs offered at public school facilities and other public agencies
   c. ensure the provision of childcare programs and services through elementary school years and age appropriate, supervised, enrichment activities available for youth in their teen years
   d. provide statutory Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for all state-funded childcare programs and services
   e. strengthen the Resource and Referral (R&R) agencies' role in recruiting and supporting family day care.

**Quality**

4. Support state responsibility to ensure the delivery of quality care. Support measures that:
   a. establish and maintain quality standards for centers and family day care homes
   b. encourage and assist childcare providers and staff to maintain and provide quality childcare
   c. provide incentives for family day care homes to become licensed
   d. provide effective monitoring of childcare programs;

e. support and facilitate increased wages and benefits for center staff and family day care operators
f. ensure that families have access to information that will help them to recognize and choose quality care.

**Affordability**

5. Support state responsibility to:
   a. meet the need for subsidized childcare through reliable and diverse sources of state funding
   b. expand tax-supported public childcare so it is available on a sliding fee basis to all socioeconomic groups
   c. make existing tax credits more progressive
   d. use various incentives, including tax breaks, to encourage businesses to offer childcare services and benefits to their employees;
   e. promote and seek federal assistance for childcare.

**Local Government**

6. Support diverse community efforts, where appropriate, to meet identified local needs for childcare services. Support measures that:
   a. explore needs and services available;
   b. provide community-wide development, coordination, and implementation of childcare policies
   c. designate a coordinator for childcare policy
   d. provide incentives for private providers through such means as subsidies, fee waivers, and simplification of the regulatory process
   e. establish childcare benefits and services for local government employees
   f. include childcare elements in General Plans and redevelopment plans
   g. commit the use of public lands and facilities for childcare programs

## COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Adopted 2003

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a statewide community college system with sufficient resources to fulfill its overall goal: to offer all Californians access to a quality higher education.

Resources should be stable, accommodate all enrolling students, be fairly distributed among the college districts, and provide opportunities for long-range planning.

Governance should allow greater authority within the system itself with local districts making key decisions about mission priorities to meet community needs.

**Mission**

1. Support retention of all five missions of the Community Colleges:
   a. to prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges
   b. to provide workplace skills, career development and certification in a wide range of occupations
   c. to offer opportunities for life-long learning
   d. to engage in programs fostering community economic development
   e. to provide instruction in basic academic skills to those who lack them.

**Access**

2. Support using the goal of providing access to higher education to all who may benefit as a prime criterion for evaluating the community college system.

**Governance**

3. Support measures that:
   a. simplify the governance of the community colleges to provide greater authority for the internal decision-making structure of the system to manage its own affairs
   b. increase local decision making by local college communities while encouraging an

effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority, in areas such as funding, between local and state entities in responding to local needs
   c. promote the role of the state structure as one of support for the local colleges as they work to serve the needs of their students and their communities.

**Finance**

4. Support measures to finance the non-capital costs of the community college system that provide:
   a. stable funding
   b. opportunities for long-range planning
   c. funding sufficient to accommodate all students
   d. funding equity among the different districts within the community college system, with accommodations for different circumstances such as special expensive programs, cost of living, urban/rural differentials and community needs.

**Priority Setting**

5. Support local determination of mission priorities for the district, within system-wide definitions of missions, guidelines and accountability standards.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Adopted 2019

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** The LWV California supports:

- a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices, pre-trial procedures, sentencing, incarceration, and re-entry;
- the elimination of systemic bias, including the disproportionate policing and incarceration of marginalized communities;
- policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve;
- collaboration between government and community throughout every stage of the criminal justice system;
- a focus on humane treatment and rehabilitation with the goal of promoting the successful re-entry into communities of those who have been incarcerated; and
- reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law-enforcement programs and policies (including scheduled, periodic audits of program and policy effectiveness).

**Support for the following measures and principles:**
**Policing Practices - constitutional policies and procedures established by law enforcement with input from the communities they serve**

- Ensure that crime prevention and promotion of public safety are the primary roles of state and local law enforcement agencies.
- Build public trust and positive community relationships through police engagement with community members.
- Encourage community participation in the development of policing policy.
- Provide police accountability via independent citizen oversight of law enforcement and publicly available data on officer conduct.
- Disseminate information to the public about policing policies, recruitment, procedures for complaint/commendation, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens and officers in interactions with each other.

- Provide sufficient psychological services and counseling to meet stress-related needs of police personnel.
- Staff police departments to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and establish recruitment efforts that reflect this principle.
- Train police to identify individuals with mental health conditions, disabilities, or substance abuse/addiction, so that officers will request support from appropriate medical and mental health professionals, with the goal of diverting those individuals into treatment instead of jail.
- Require all officers to render first aid to people who have been injured as a result of police action.
- Conduct comprehensive background checks, to include such history as PTSD, domestic violence, sex offenses and affiliations with domestic terrorist groups, for all applicants to law enforcement positions.
- Establish de-escalation (the use of time, distance, communications and available resources whenever it is safe to do so) and anti-bias training and ensure that all staff are provided with this training.
- Authorize minimal use force during police encounters with the public and consider deadly force only when necessary to prevent imminent death or serious bodily injury.

**Pre-trial Procedures - actions taken after an individual has been arrested, which embody the constitutional presumption of innocence**

- Ensure no person suffers discrimination before the law due to their economic status nor should they be subject to risk assessment tools which can produce biased outcomes.
- Provide adequate numbers of public defenders to defend indigent accused.
- Provide prosecutors, defense attorneys, court counselors and judges with regular training on alternatives to incarceration, including pre-trial diversion and restorative justice practices.
- Recognize that mental health conditions and substance abuse/addictions are public health issues, not crimes.
- Implement the use of specialty courts, e.g. drug treatment courts and restorative justice programs.
- Consider community-based treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

**Sentencing - judgment made after an individual has been declared to be guilty**

- Consider the individual circumstances of the person charged and nature of the crime, rather than mandatory minimum sentences.
- Consider split sentencing and/or alternatives to incarceration when appropriate.

**Incarceration - policies and procedures that apply to employees of and incarcerated individuals in local jails and state prisons**

- Ensure that all correctional systems provide humane, dignified, non-discriminatory treatment of incarcerated people and personnel, including appropriate healthcare and access to community-based rehabilitation programs.
- Eliminate the practice of solitary confinement.
- Ensure that incarcerated people and corrections officers have clear, safe and accessible ways to report abuse.
- Address recidivism by instituting programs that focus on rehabilitation, education, mental health treatment, substance abuse recovery, and transitional programs.
- Adapt case management services to match education, behavior, job training, work, and mental health programs with the needs of incarcerated individuals.
- Provide sufficient psychological services, including training and evaluation, to meet the needs of corrections officers.
- Encourage family and community visitations and ways to maintain contact.
- Eliminate private prisons. Until space in public prisons is available, ensure that private prisons comply with all of the standards for state-run jails and prisons.

**Re-entry - programs in place during and after incarceration to help individuals become successful members of their communities**

- Collaborate with community-based organizations to facilitate reintegration of people released from prison.
- Provide pre- and post-release programs, inclusive of probation services, to prepare as

well as assess and address the needs of people re-entering the community.
- Remove technical violations of parole as a reason to return an individual to prison.

**General - statements which apply to some or all of the above categories**

- Standardize data and setting up systems so that information can be easily shared among criminal justice agencies.
- Rely on evidence-based research in decision making about criminal justice programs and policies.

## EDUCATION: PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 12

Adopted 1973; Updated 1985, 2005, 2021

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public education system that meets the needs of each individual student; challenges all students to reach their highest potential; and develops patterns of lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Support improvements in public education, based on access with both equitable and sufficient opportunities to learn for all students.

Support the implementation and enforcement of academic, equity, transparency and financial standards for the authorization and reauthorization of all charter schools. Education Code regulations with respect to the authorization, reauthorization and oversight of charter schools—whether independent, dependent, seat-based, independent-study, virtual or other—should be clear and enforced.

Support a system of public education funding that is adequate, flexible, equitable, reliable and sustainable; derived from a combination of revenue sources; and distributed fairly to support access and equitable opportunities for all students.

Support formulating broad general guidelines at the state level, with flexibility at the local level for developing and implementing program.

**Equitable Access to Quality Education**

1. The state is ultimately responsible for providing a system of public education.
2. Basic educational necessities provided to some students must be provided to all.
3. The fundamental elements that must be present to create a teaching and learning environment that provides access and equitable opportunity for all children include, but are not limited to:
    a. a safe school environment
    b. books and instructional supplies
    c. clean, healthy facilities in good repair, with seating for all students
    d. fully qualified teachers
    e. parental involvement
    f. strong school-site management.
4. An effective state system of monitoring and accountability must be present to ensure that all receive basic educational necessities.

**Equitable Access to Quality Education: Readiness to Learn**

5. All children should enter school ready to learn to their fullest potential. Measures to ensure this are:
    a. school readiness programs, including universal access to preschools that are high quality, developmentally appropriate, and voluntary
    b. outreach to and support for parents of young children to enable parents to contribute to their child's readiness to learn.

**Curriculum**

6. There should be joint responsibility for coordinated curriculum planning in which the state develops broad guidelines for a common core curriculum and the local district develops a comprehensive, challenging curriculum that:
   a. includes the state minimum requirements
   b. meets the needs and challenges the abilities of all students in the district
   c. reflects priorities set in the local community.

**Curriculum: Guidelines**

7. There should be state policies, guidelines, and standards for curriculum that encourage the local districts to:
   a. develop a broad curriculum
   b. provide for an appropriate range of student abilities and interests
   c. evaluate feasibility of proposals and effectiveness of curriculum.

**Curriculum: Program**

8. There should be educational programs that have sufficient resources to provide all students with:
   a. a command of basic skills
   b. competence in complex skills
   c. exposure to a broad common body of knowledge
   d. an appreciation and respect for one's own cultural heritage and that of others
   e. sufficient instruction to develop competence in speaking, reading, and writing English
   f. services needed to ensure a school environment conducive to learning
   g. a process to identify special needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs
   h. a variety of challenging learning opportunities
   i. preparation for leading productive lives, including responsible citizenship
   j. the opportunity to graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to choose postsecondary education or immediate entry into gainful employment or both.

**Curriculum: Assessment Personnel: Local Level**

9. There should be responsibility at the state level for a student assessment system that has as its goal the improvement of the quality of education and student learning with:
   a. adequate resources, assistance and time to enable schools to improve student learning
   b. development of appropriate assessment tools that measure basic skills as well as complex skills and reveal exposure to a broad common body of knowledge
   c. a student assessment system that is timely, accessible, and understandable to teachers, parents, administrators, and the public
   d. a student assessment system that recognizes and promotes student advancement and growth rather than initiating punitive sanctions.

**Personnel: State Level**

10. Responsibility at the state level for:
    a. developing guidelines for recruiting, training, certifying, and retraining teachers that maintain high standards
    b. including early and extensive experience in the classroom in the teacher training system
    c. developing guidelines for evaluation that are fair, rigorous, and frequent with high standards for retraining teachers and with effective procedures for removing ineffective teachers
    d. allocating sufficient funds to provide adequate and appropriate salaries for teachers and administrators
    e. maintaining a financially sound teacher retirement system
    f. regulations governing tenure that permit a fair, rigorous, and frequent evaluation system.

**Personnel: Local Level**

11. Responsibility at the local level for:
    a. maintaining high performance standards for teachers and administrators
    b. implementing a fair, rigorous, frequent evaluation system
    c. providing opportunities for retraining and professional growth for teachers
    d. ensuring adequate and appropriate salaries and benefits
    e. providing a work environment that is conducive to good teaching

f. providing incentives for excellence in teaching
g. sustaining community support and recognition for educators and education
h. providing the appropriate notice and access for the community to the collective bargaining process utilizing, when possible, collaborative approaches to collective bargaining.

**Finance: State Level**

12. Responsibility at the state level for:
    a. primary funding of public education, with provision for as much local control as possible over local schools
    b. providing sustainable, transparent, adequate, flexible, and timely funding derived from a combination of tax sources to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve state standards
    c. developing a school finance system that incorporates a multi-year mechanism and enables orderly, timely, effective budgeting and negotiating processes at the local level
    d. develop a process for forward funding of the educational budget with decisions made in the year before implementation
    e. equitable distribution of general purpose funds based on student population
    f. separate and appropriate funding of categorical programs for students with special needs such as Special Education, English Language Learners, and the socio-economically disadvantaged
    g. limiting the number of programs qualifying for categorical funding to increase flexibility to meet local priorities
    h. an equitable funding system that encourages local control
    i. full funding of mandated programs and procedures to avoid encroachment upon the general educational program
    j. periodic review of state-mandated programs
    k. a uniform system of budgeting and accounting that is understandable to the public
    l. opposition to expenditures by the state for vouchers to nonpublic schools
    m. measures that make it possible for school districts to seek new revenue locally.

**Finance: District Level**

13. Responsibility at the district level for:
    a. seeking input on educational priorities from all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, school site councils, school board members, principals, teachers, parents, and community organizations
    b. utilizing available flexibility of funds to meet local priorities.

**Governance**

14. There should be a system of educational governance that:
    a. clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of institutions such as the State Board of Education and individuals such as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction responsible for educational governance
    b. provides clear lines of authority, with accountability
    1) the state is accountable to its citizens for providing public education to all California students
    2) the local district is accountable to its community and state for meeting the educational needs of its students.

**Governance: State Level**

15. Responsibility at the state level for:
    a. setting broad education goals and policies;
    b. formulating long range plans for the statewide system
    c. determining minimum standards and guidelines for evaluating student progress
    d. a state educational code that defines state responsibilities and allows local decision making
    e. developing broad guidelines for instructional materials selection
    f. school building safety standards.

**Governance: Local Level**

16. Responsibility at the local level for:
    a. setting long range community goals and interim objectives
    b. long range plan for the district;
    c. formulation, implementation, and evaluation of programs
    d. effective implementation of mandated programs

e. developing strategies and methods to improve performance of at-risk students;
f. involving the community in assessing local educational needs and goals
g. working cooperatively with local and/or county agencies to obtain support for school services.

**Role of the Public**

17. The public should play a role in public education with:
    a. public access and involvement in decision making provided by state and local educational governance bodies
    b. parental and community involvement encouraged at the school site level.

**Public Charter Schools**

18. The League believes public charter schools should:
    a. be authorized and under the oversight of a locally elected or appointed school board within whose district or county they reside;
    b. be governed only by an entity with ties and accountability to the community whose students they serve;
    c. provide equitable access to all students and work to have enrollment reflect the demographics of the community served;
    d. be required to report the same academic, demographic, attendance, and financial data to the state and the public as any other public school and school district;
    e. be required to get authorization for any expansion to new sites (including resource centers) and that any such expansion require an evaluation of their current effectiveness and compliance with their contract;
    f. adhere to the California Public Records Act and applicable Open Meeting laws and provisions of the Political Reform Act of 1974.
19. The League further believes that:
    a. California standards governing the granting of charters, their renewal and their funding should be periodically reevaluated and amended as necessary;
    b. the calculation of attendance for independent-study and virtual schools should be evaluated to align attendance practices with school district standards.

## HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Adopted 1970; Updated 1973, 1993

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support equal opportunity in housing.

Support measures to provide state programs to increase the supply of safe, decent, and adequate housing for all Californians.

Support action at all levels of government for the provision of affordable housing for all Californians.

1. Programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination based on race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.
2. An overall state plan for development with integration of housing, land use and transportation and with attention to factors such as natural resources and basic human needs.
3. State financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, tax incentives and other means to encourage housing construction and rehabilitation.
    a. Broad state guidelines for use of these funds with more local decision making.
    b. Use of fiscal incentives and disincentives to encourage enforcement of state housing law.
    c. Enforcement of use of redevelopment set-aside funds for low and moderate-income housing.
4. Standardization and modernization of local building and zoning codes to conform with a state code that
    a. is enforced by trained inspectors

b. encourages new and innovative building materials and methods that can be used to cut housing construction costs
c. encourages the use of density bonuses; mixed, cluster and inclusionary zoning; second units; infill development; air rights; and increased density along transportation corridors.

5. Protection of the rights of both tenants and landlords.
6. Removal of barriers that inhibit the construction of low- and moderate-income housing including eventual elimination from the Constitution of the provisions for voter approval before a low-rent housing project may be developed, constructed, or acquired by a public body.
7. Education of state and local communities concerning need for affordable housing and methods by which this can be attained.

You can view the **Homelessness Action Policy** on page 46.

## JUVENILE JUSTICE/DEPENDENCY

Adopted 1997 and 1999; Amended 2011

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support a juvenile justice/dependency system that works to prevent child abuse and neglect and juvenile delinquency, that serves foster children and their families and status offenders, and that rehabilitates juvenile offenders, by promoting the safety and well-being of children and helping to prepare them for productive participation in society. Support early identification of at-risk children and families followed by appropriate referrals to services that work with children, youth, families and schools. Support community efforts to provide safe supportive environments for children and their families and institutions that respect them and promote non-violent solutions to problems. Support the rights and best interests of the child in preference to those of any other individual.

1. Efforts to deal with dependency issues and provide juvenile justice should:
   a. reinforce a young person's right to safety, support, respect, and justice
   b. emphasize prevention and early intervention
   c. intervene in the life of a child or family in the least intrusive, least punitive, yet effective way
   d. identify needs at an early age and provide a wide range of interventions
   e. be coordinated between state, county and local government agencies, including school systems, community-based organizations, and the communities they serve
   f. be integrated, with exchange of confidential information where appropriate
   g. be adequately and flexibly funded at the appropriate governmental level, to allow for caseloads of appropriate size and provision of effective services for as long as needed
   h. use programs and services that operate and are evaluated according to state standards and are administered by competent staff, appropriately trained to respect and deal sensitively with children, youth, and families of various backgrounds and characteristics
   i. provide long-term continuity with individual judges and case workers for young people and their families
   j. assure that children who are both foster children and delinquent receive appropriate services
   k. assist young people leaving both systems with housing, counseling, education, and work.
2. State, county and city government, public school systems, communities, and the private sector share responsibility for efforts to deal

with juvenile delinquency and child abuse and neglect.

a. The State should provide adequate funding, standards and evaluation based on those standards, coordination at the state level, and technical assistance that includes collection and dissemination of information and should facilitate local coordination. To help increase funding for these efforts, state general fund spending priorities should be reordered, including the diversion of funding for the adult penal system to funding for these programs, and state allocation to counties and cities for these efforts should be increased.
b. Juvenile Courts should be well managed, provide due process, protect the rights of all affected parties, work with community resources, and ensure that county child welfare services provide appropriate coordinated services to children and families.
c. School systems should educate students and prepare them to lead productive lives; promote regular school attendance and provide effective truancy programs; and provide appropriate educational services to students with learning disabilities, children in foster care, expelled students, and those returning from secure facilities.
d. Communities should provide safe environments for children and their families.
e. The private sector should be encouraged to report cases of child abuse; address the impact of societal discrimination; support efforts to reduce poverty; provide jobs for young people; support effective community-based programs; and work with young people as volunteer tutors, mentors, and advocates.

3. The reduction of child abuse and neglect and the care for children removed from their home are the primary responsibilities of the child welfare system with assistance from organizations and individuals that include law enforcement, schools, providers of health and mental health services, community colleges, and members of the public.
   a. To reduce child abuse and neglect, the child welfare system, other appropriate organizations, and the public should:
      1) provide social and health services to children and families, such as parenting education, home visiting, prenatal and infant health care, substance abuse treatment, reduction of domestic violence, family counseling, job training and assistance in finding employment, and low cost housing
      2) report suspected child abuse and neglect, investigate reports of child abuse and neglect, remove children from the home when appropriate, and provide in-home services for family preservation and reunification long enough to be effective.
   b. to care for children removed from home, the child welfare system, other appropriate organizations, and the public should:
      1) place children in a permanent home quickly, using adoption, kinship care, guardianship, permanent foster care, or other placements as appropriate
      2) plan quickly for permanency placement, including concurrent planning for family reunification and permanent placement for children who are least likely to go home
      3) support foster parents and kinship families
      4) assess children quickly and provide appropriate services such as health care, mental health treatment, special education, and other appropriate school support services
      5) assist young people in or recently emancipated from foster care to prepare for independence as adults.
4. State, county and city government, public schools, communities, and the private sector share responsibility for prevention and early intervention of juvenile delinquency, services to status offenders, rehabilitation and accountability of the offender, and alternatives to incarceration. State and counties have responsibilities for incarceration of serious offenders.

a. The State should fund programs in or linked to schools to serve children at risk of becoming delinquent or truant, administer secure facilities for serious violent offenders, and provide services for offenders after incarceration.
b. Counties should provide educational services to offenders in the community and should maintain juvenile halls, camps, ranches and schools that meet state standards, are safe, and provide education and other rehabilitation services to offenders.
c. To prevent delinquency and serve juvenile offenders, local governments and communities should effectively enforce laws affecting juveniles, should provide balanced restorative justice, and should provide healthy safe opportunities for alternative activities to delinquent behavior, services for status offenders, alternatives to incarceration, jobs, job training and work opportunities for young people, and assistance for young people who have been released from secure facilities. Emphasis should be placed on diversion and rehabilitation consistent with public safety. Recognition should be given of the need to treat juveniles differently from adults because juvenile cognitive, developmental and behavioral maturity is in the formative stage.

## LEGAL AID

Adopted 1971; Revised 1983

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support measures that will enable the judicial system of the state to provide for all citizens adequate access to legal services.

Support adequately funded, government supported legal assistance programs that provide legal aid to those unable to pay.

## MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Adopted 1998

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** Support an adequately funded mental health care system that provides comprehensive services to the acutely, chronically and seriously mentally ill of all ages; maintains optimal mental health services for all clients; places emphasis on meeting the needs of children; offers mental health services for the homeless; seeks additional funds for preventive services; implements a master plan to integrate services; raises awareness of critical unmet needs; and emphasizes case management.

Support for:

1. An adequately funded county mental health care system that:
   a. provides comprehensive services to the acutely, chronically and seriously mentally ill of all ages
   b. places emphasis on meeting the needs of children
   c. seeks additional funds to provide preventive services
   d. offers mental health services for the homeless
   e. maintains optimum mental health services for all clients.
2. Implementation of a master plan that:
   a. ensures that there will be a network of integrated services, clearly defined and consistent with a community support model
   b. advocates an awareness of and concern about the critical unmet needs within the county
   c. emphasizes case management that includes assistance with housing, financial

entitlements, rehabilitative and vocational programs.
3. Centers for the seriously and chronically mentally ill apart from the county system.
4. Regulations that provide an adequate length of time for evaluation and treatment of involuntary holds.
5. Model mandatory outpatient care program with adequate supervisory staff.

## PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

Adopted 2016

**POSITION IN BRIEF:** The League of Women Voters of California supports a comprehensive system of public higher education that serves the personal, professional, and occupational goals of all adult Californians and advances the social, economic, and civic needs of the state. To achieve these objectives, public higher education must prioritize access, affordability, equity, and excellence. These priorities require state funding, including student financial aid, that is stable, predictable, sustainable, and timely.

**Purpose**

1. Support a comprehensive system of public higher education that provides access to educational opportunities to advance both individual and public goals. Support measures that:
   a. provide post-secondary opportunities for personal and professional growth
   b. sustain upward economic mobility across all population groups
   c. advance the economic and civic goals of local communities and the state
   d. provide and maintain a steady stream of educated Californians to ensure leadership from all sectors of society.

**Equity**

2. Support equitable access to public higher education and equitable rates of completion. Support measures that:
   a. increase the diversity of enrollment and completion rates in the community colleges and public four-year universities to reflect the diversity of the state's population
   b. increase the initial first year enrollment in public four-year universities of qualified California high school graduates from low-income and underrepresented minority groups
   c. provide effective specialized services for those students (such as emancipated foster youth, veterans, and disabled, homeless, incarcerated, first-generation, and/or low-income students) who need additional support to facilitate their successful certificate or degree completion.

**Funding and Financial Aid**

3. Support state funding for California public higher education and student financial aid. Support measures that:
   a. ensure funding that meets the objectives of public higher education
   b. ensure funding that is stable, predictable, and timely
   c. ensure that the full cost of higher education attendance, including tuition, fees, food, housing, transportation, and books or other educational materials, is affordable for all qualified students, regardless of their family's financial circumstances
   d. share the full cost of attendance in public higher education between government and students or their families based on ability to pay
   e. provide adequate funding for services for students with special circumstances, such as emancipated foster youth, veterans, and disabled, homeless, incarcerated, first-generation, and/or low-income students
   f. provide effective counseling to enable students and their families to plan and access financing for their college education;

g. develop additional revenue sources for public higher education as needed.

**Preparedness**

4. Support programs that foster coordination and articulation between preK-12 school districts and public higher education so that all high school graduates are prepared for college-level coursework and/or gainful employment. Support measures that:
   a. expand opportunities for high school students to begin earning college credits in high school
   b. advise all students and their families about the wide range of career and college opportunities;
   c. provide outreach to students from underrepresented communities as well as disadvantaged, low-income, and first-generation students while they are still in the preK-12 system to encourage and assist with college applications for admission and financial aid.

**Degree Completion**

5. Support programs that increase attainment of certificates, and associate, baccalaureate, and professional degrees. Support measures that:
   a. improve articulation among the three higher education sectors to construct curriculum pathways that enable students to transfer smoothly to four-year universities
   b. increase enrollment capacity at the four-year universities to serve more transfers and entering first year students
   c. utilize research-based models to increase baccalaureate degree attainment and coordination of the three higher education sectors
   d. support the implementation and evaluation of evidence-based improvements in curriculum, instruction, and placement to enhance student success and degree attainment.

**Workforce Development and Adult Education**

6. Support access to credit, non-credit, and workforce training and development. Support measures that:
   a. expand and increase completion of programs, including certificate programs, that fulfill labor needs and enable people to be trained/retrained for meaningful jobs and careers
   b. provide credit and non-credit adult education courses with entry-level opportunities into post-secondary education, courses such as English as a Second Language, and/or courses that support lifelong learning.

**Improving California Public Higher Education**

7. Support a comprehensive system of public higher education with viable access points for all adult Californians. Support measures that:
   a. continue to prioritize the dual values of access and excellence that were embedded in the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education
   b. create a mechanism, such as an oversight body, to improve coordination and articulation among the three higher education sectors
   c. evaluate the functioning and efficacy of higher education as a system
   d. provide nonpartisan analysis and recommendations for improvement
   e. develop a longitudinal student database to track enrollment, transfer and completion rates across all three higher education sectors and provide feedback to pK-12 schools
   f. expand the use of new technologies, such as online education, that increase student access and success.

# ACTION POLICIES

## CHILDREN AND FAMILY ISSUES ACTION POLICY

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 1993*

Those of us in League who consider ourselves children's advocates are always searching for ways to expand our positions so that we may become more effective advocates. We feel strongly that in advocating for children we must recognize the critical needs of families and consider the long-term negative impact of not addressing these needs.

The following is a compilation of state and national positions that can be used to address child and family issues. The state positions come from the *LWVC Action Policies and Positions*. The national positions come from *Impact on Issues*. We hope that members of local Leagues will use these positions to advocate on behalf of the children and families in their communities.

**LWVC CHILDREN AND FAMILY POLICY**: LWVC is committed to the principles that all children are entitled to safe, nurturing care and that caring for children is a societal as well as a family responsibility. LWVC supports programs and policies that would effectively coordinate and integrate services that meet basic human needs, prevent or reduce poverty, and promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

### STATE AND NATIONAL LEAGUE POSITIONS

**State and Local Finances (LWVC)**

This is the backdrop against which all budgetary decisions are made for children and families. The SLF position allows local Leagues to have an impact on budget decisions that impact children and families. The following statements are of particular relevance.

*Position in brief:*

Support measures to ensure revenues both sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services; that contribute to a system of public finance that emphasizes equity and fair sharing of the tax burden as well as adequacy; . . .Support a process that maintains statutory authority over tax sources, rates and tax expenditures; . . .

2. To ensure adequacy of revenue by:
   b. a variety of revenue sources available to local governments including a wide range of local taxes . . .
   c. local revenue sources including fees, with provision for persons unable to pay fees or charges levied on essential community wide services; and benefit assessments, when benefits accrue primarily to those paying . . .
   d. use by local governments of tax base sharing; state and federal assistance; and cost saving management techniques.
4. To ensure flexibility of revenue by:
   f. public program and funding priorities that give primary consideration to meeting the basic needs of the general population, attaining program objectives economically, and using procedures that promote flexibility and permit diversity of services
   g. selective reductions within and among programs rather than across-the-board cutbacks when funding is reduced.

**Education: Pre-Kindergarten through 12 (LWVC )**

The Education position and the LWVUS Equality of Opportunity position allow us to address the needs of children in grades Pre-K through 12.

*Position in brief:*

Support a comprehensive pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade public education system that meets the needs of each individual student; challenges all students to reach their highest potential; develops patterns of lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Support improvements in public education, based on access with both equitable and

sufficient opportunities to learn for all students.

Support a system of public education funding that is adequate, flexible, equitable, reliable and sustainable; derived from a combination of revenue sources; distributed fairly to support access and equitable opportunities for all students.

Support formulating broad general guidelines at the state level, with flexibility at the local level for developing and implementing program.

**Equality of Opportunity (LWVUS)**

The Equality of Opportunity position supports:

Greatly increased educational opportunity through compensatory programs for disadvantaged groups beginning at the preschool level and extending through secondary education.

**Childcare (LWVC, LWVUS)**

*LWVC Position in Brief:*

Support state and local policies, legislation and programs that meet the need for accessible, affordable and quality childcare.

*LWVUS Position:*

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it in order to increase access to employment and to prevent or reduce poverty.

**Health Care (LWVUS)**

*LWVUS Meeting Basic Human Needs position:*

The LWVUS believes that access to health care includes the following: preventive care, primary care, maternal and child health care, emergency care, catastrophic care, nursing home care and mental health care as well as access to substance abuse programs, health and sex education programs and nutrition programs.

*LWVUS Health Care Position in brief:*

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

**Basic Income Support/Meeting Basic Human Needs (LWVUS)**

The Meeting Basic Human Needs position is an invaluable resource for advocating for children and families. Not only does it allow us to address basic needs such as housing, food, basic income support and health care, but it allows us to take positions on teen pregnancy and child support. It is important to be familiar with the entire position. The following excerpts are of particular importance:

The LWVUS believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty.

In order to prevent or reduce poverty, the LWVUS supports policies and programs designed to:

- increase job opportunities
- increase access to health insurance
- provide support services such as childcare and transportation
- provide opportunities and/or incentives for basic or remedial education and job training
- decrease teen pregnancy
- ensure that noncustodial parents contribute to the support of their children.

**Intergovernmental Relationships (LWVC)**

It is important to develop a comprehensive vision for delivery of children's services. Collaboration and coordination of services at all levels of government is imperative. In order to meet the changing needs of children and families and ensure seamless delivery of services and melding of funding streams, we must speak to the planning and coordination process. The implementation of the federal Childcare and Development Block Grant is an example of how better communication between levels of government, intergovernmental agencies and the public could expedite the process.

*Position in brief:*

Support an efficient, effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority among

the levels of government with accountability to the public.

1. A rational organization of powers and functions of the several levels of government:
   a. based on economic efficiency, administrative effectiveness, political accountability, and fiscal equity;
   b. determined by a process of review and recommendation that provides for both local and statewide representation;
   c. providing for consolidation of functions between and among levels of government to deal with area-wide problems, and to achieve cost savings that will not adversely affect, and wherever possible will improve, the quality of service.
2. Flexibility for local governments when administering state authorized and/or funded programs to determine needs, priorities, and the use of funds, consistent with state program objectives.
7. Active participation by the public in state and local government.

**CONCLUSION**

State and national positions, including the LWVC **Juvenile Justice/Dependency** position adopted in 1997 and 1999 (see page 34), give advocates for children and families opportunities for advocacy and action at many levels. Let us work to maximize our advocacy efforts in areas that we can impact now and look forward to broadening our efforts in the future.

*Note: Citations referring to LWVC State and Local Finances positions have been updated to be consistent with the 1995 SLF consensus. Those referring to Education have been updated to be consistent with the LWVC Education: Pre-Kindergarten through 12 position adopted in 2005.

## CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION POLICY

Adopted 2017

The League of Women Voters of California supports actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change in order to protect our state from the negative physical, economic, and public health effects. Local Leagues and ILOs are urged to engage at their local and regional levels. Our actions are to:

- Promote energy conservation and efficiency in transportation, buildings, and infrastructure, including energy efficiency standards and land use policies that reduce vehicle miles travelled.
- Promote carbon pricing by market mechanisms such as cap and trade systems and carbon taxes.
- Promote a clean, low-carbon energy economy that is sustainable, including all forms of renewable energy and transportation infrastructure.
- Promote policies that mitigate impacts of climate change by adaptation in urban, rural, agricultural, and natural settings.
- Promote basic research and technology development, encouraging the use of a portfolio of technologies.
- Promote solutions that ease consequences of climate-related hardships to low- and moderate-income households.
- Promote public access and involvement in the decision-making process.

## Justification for Climate Change Action Policy Elements

This section specifies national and state League positions that justify elements of the proposed Action Policy. The full position statements are given in the LWVUS publication Impact on Issues and the LWVC publication Action Policies and Positions.

### LWVUS Positions

The League's position is to preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment. Climate change is, by far, the greatest challenge to the balance of our ecosystem.

**NATURAL RESOURCES OVERARCHING POSITION STATEMENT:**

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

**Natural Resources**: Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

**Resource Management:** Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

**Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**: Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

- ***Air Quality***. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.
- ***Energy***. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.
- ***Land Use***. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

**Public Participation**: Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

**The League supports legislative solutions**, including setting caps on greenhouse gas pollution, putting a price on GHG pollution, encouraging conservation and renewable energy, and investing in a new clean energy economy. In 2008, the LWVUS called on Congress to enact legislation to significantly cut the greenhouse gas emissions which cause global warming and supported increased energy efficiency and a shift to a clean, renewable energy. We supported the 2015 Clean Power Plan.

### LWVC Positions and Action Policies

At the state level, the League of Women Voters of California has adopted positions on clean air, renewable energy, land conservation, and transportation solutions. Based on these existing positions, we have advocated for climate change legislation and administrative actions. Throughout all positions, we call for public information and the opportunity for citizens to participate in the decision-making process.

**Air Quality Position in Brief (1971/73):** The League supports measures to establish air quality standards that will protect the public health and welfare, and the development of effective enforcement and implementation procedures at each level of government to attain these standards.

Summary of Air Quality positions applicable to climate change: We support setting air quality standards at the state level that may be stricter than national standards; support lower levels of government in the enforcement of the standards and encourage a program of educating and instructing the public. We believe that the cost of converting industry from polluting to nonpolluting practices should be borne primarily by industry. We encourage the establishment of a well-developed mass transit system designed to reduce automobile travel.

**Energy Position in Brief (1978/80; 2006/07):** The League supports development of a state energy policy that will ensure reliability of energy resources and protection of the environment and public health and safety, at reasonable customer rates, giving primary consideration to conservation and energy efficiency. State government should provide an efficient, coordinated energy administrative structure with open transparent procedures.

*Summary of Energy positions applicable to climate change*: State agencies should give primary consideration to conservation and energy efficiency. In acquiring new electric resources, major additional factors to consider include the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and development and deployment of renewable resources. Statewide standards should be set for renewable resource development and use economic/market and other incentives to foster renewable energy, conservation, demand-side management and greenhouse gas reductions. Decisions at the regional level should incorporate participation by local governments. Local governments should promote energy conservation, especially in relation to building codes, transportation, resource recovery, and public information. Any direct-access (choice of a provider) policy should not result in additional cost to the remaining core customers.

**Land Use Position in Brief (1975)**: The League supports state land use planning that recognizes land as a resource as well as a commodity. The state should establish guidelines and standards for land areas of more than local concern. Decisions for these areas should be made at the lowest level of government feasible but should be subject to state review. Citizens must have a meaningful participation in land use planning and regulation.

*Summary of Land Use positions applicable to climate change*: State policies, guidelines, and standards should be developed for land areas such as fragile or historic lands, renewable resource lands, natural hazard lands, and land impacted by public investment. State land use planning should be part of an integrated overall state planning effort, with environmental, social and economic impact statements required on major developments.

**Transportation Position in Brief** (1981/85, 1991): The League supports a transportation system to move people and goods that includes a variety of transportation modes, with emphasis on increased public transportation services and other viable alternatives to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT); is efficient, convenient, and cost effective; is safe and secure; serves all segments of the population and diverse geographic needs; minimizes harmful effects on the environment; is integrated with land use; and is supported by extensive public education.

*Summary of Transportation positions applicable to climate change*: Transportation and land use planning should be integrated to promote reduced vehicle miles traveled through a jobs/housing balance and requirements that land use development facilitate use of transit and other alternatives to single occupant vehicles. Planning for transportation should promote strategies to influence travel behavior, such as fees, taxes, and tolls, combined with mitigation measures for low income persons.

**Sustainable Communities Action Policy (1999):**

*Definition*: Sustainable communities recognize their interdependence with the global community and seek to meet current economic, environmental, and social demands through equitable and democratic means without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs . . . the full social and environmental costs of production, provision, and disposal of goods and services are acknowledged . . . .

*General Statement*: Sustainability refers to the dynamic among ecological, economic, and social systems on a global scale. It demands consideration of the interactions among positions in different program areas. League positions speak of preservation and conservation, of stewardship, of considering long term benefits and meeting future needs.

Principles of sustainability are reflected in most program areas, although often they are implicit rather than explicit:

- With respect to government, positions support policies that promote equity, flexibility, and responsibility so that democratic government is encouraged and protected.
- With respect to natural resources, positions support protection and wise management in the public interest to promote an environment beneficial to life.
- With respect to social policy, positions promote the equity, justice, education, and nurturing essential to a sustainable society.

**Growth Management Action Policy (1992)**: In summary, this LWVC policy seeks to promote management of growth and land use at the level

of impact on systems, whether local, regional, or statewide. Impacts include natural resources, air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources. League positions mentioned in the policy that are pertinent to climate change include:

- Recognition of land as a resource as well as a commodity (LWVC—Land Use)
- Identification and regulation of land areas such as fragile or historic lands, renewable resource lands (LWVC—Land Use #1), including the long-term protection of land appropriate for agriculture (LWVC—Agriculture); natural hazard lands and lands impacted by public investment (LWVC—Land Use #1)
- Environmental social and economic impact statements on major developments, public and private (LWVC—Land Use #2b)
- Integration of transportation and land use planning to promote reduced vehicle miles travelled through a jobs/housing balance and requirements that land use development facilitate use of transit and other alternatives to single-occupant vehicles (LWVC—Transportation #1)
- Growth management decisions should relate to and protect the overall quality of the environment.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACTION POLICY

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 1992

### BACKGROUND

This policy statement was adopted by the LWVC board of directors in May 1992. Although it is primarily intended to assist in analyzing state legislation on growth management, it may also be relevant at the regional and local levels. It may be used by ILOs and local Leagues in taking local (city, county, region) action on growth management.

This statement is based on the Land Use study/consensus of 1975 and subsequent LWVC studies. “Growth management” is the 1990’s term for what LWVC and LWVUS called “land use” in the 1970’s. Therefore, the policy statement is based primarily on the land use consensus; the term “growth management” has been substituted for “land use” where it seems appropriate.

The process of developing the statement included a review of the following:

- pertinent LWVC positions, particularly Land Use, Intergovernmental Relationships, Agriculture, and Transportation, and to a lesser extent Water, Air Quality, Housing, and Solid Waste
- *LWVC Growth Management Action Guidelines* of October 26, 1990
- publications by the Regional Governance Network of the LWV of the Bay Area and a draft publication on regional governance by the Southern California Environmental Action Committee (ENACT)
- reports from the Office of Planning and Research and the Growth Management Consensus Project of California State University, Sacramento.

The Action Policy is annotated to aid in its application.

### GENERAL STATEMENT IN BRIEF

An integrated overall state planning effort should provide for the management of growth (*LWVC Land Use #2*). To accomplish this requires clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, competent personnel, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government (*LWV Principles*).

Provision should be made for the efficient, effective and equitable balance of responsibility and authority among the levels of government with accountability to the public (*LWVC Intergovernmental Relationships in Brief*). All levels of government assigned growth management planning and regulatory responsibilities must provide for the following:

- involvement of citizens in the earliest planning and regulatory stages and throughout the growth management process
- adequate funding of the public information process
- development of mechanisms to minimize conflict of interest on the part of persons who make growth management decisions (*LWVC Land Use #6*).

**1. State Role**

State policies, guidelines and standards should be developed for managing growth that is of more than local concern (*LWVC Land Use*). These policies, guidelines and standards should require the following:

- recognition of land as a resource as well as a commodity (*LWVC Land Use*)
- identification and regulation of land areas such as fragile or historic lands, renewable resource lands (*LWVC Land Use #1*), including the long-term protection of land appropriate for agriculture (*LWVC Agriculture*); natural hazard lands and lands impacted by public investment (*LWVC Land Use #1*)
- environmental social and economic impact statements on major developments, public and private (*LWVC Land Use #2b*)
- coordination of plans and policies of local and regional agencies, maximizing local decision-making (*LWVC Land Use #2a)*
- integration of transportation and land use planning to promote reduced vehicle miles travelled through a jobs/housing balance and requirements that land use development facilitate use of transit and other alternatives to single-occupant vehicles (*LWVC Transportation #1*)
- management and development of water resources in ways that emphasize conservation and high standards of water quality and coordination of water resource planning with land use planning to provide for future needs without encouraging growth (*LWVC Water in Brief and #1a*)
- an increase in the supply of safe, decent, adequate housing for all Californians including removal of barriers that inhibit construction of low- and moderate-income housing (*LWVC Housing #2, #6, and in Brief*)
- recognition of the interrelationship of decisions relating to air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources (*LWVUS Natural Resources*)
- establishment of mechanisms to mediate or arbitrate conflicts between governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies in order to implement growth management decisions (*LWVC Land Use #3*).

The state should assist local and regional agencies in the development and exercise of growth management functions by increased state financial aid for research, technical assistance and data collection (*LWVC Land Use #2c*).

The state should encourage the formation of substate regional bodies for growth management planning and control in matters of more than local concern (*LWVC Land Use #4*).

The state should assume authority for growth management planning and control where local governments and regional bodies fail to do so (*LWVC Land Use #3)*.

**2. Regional Role**

Regional decision-making should include extensive local input (*LWVC Transportation #4*). Decisions should be made at the lowest level of government feasible but should be subject to state review (*LWVC Land Use in Brief*). Provision should be made to allow for consolidation of functions between and among levels of government to deal with areawide problems (*LWVC Intergovernmental Relationships #1c*), such as air quality, transportation, water quality, solid and hazardous waste disposal, and growth management (*LWVC respective positions for AQ, etc.*). The state should grant each region the option to determine how to structure representation on its respective regional body for handling growth management decisions. *

**3. Local Role**

Local land use planning should be utilized as a means to determine how local communities should change and develop consistent with

state growth management policies, guidelines and standards.

- General plans should be used as a basis for zoning and other planning decisions at the local level.
- Growth management decisions should relate to and protect the overall quality of the environment.
- Local government should plan for the preservation of open space and provide for adequate parks and recreation (*LWVC Land Use #5*).

**4. Financing**

Flexibility should be granted to local and regional agencies when administering state authorized and/or state funded programs to determine needs, priorities, and the use of funds, consistent with state growth management policies, guidelines, and standards (*LWVC Intergovernmental Relationships #2, Transportation #3*).

Tax-base sharing should be authorized to implement growth management policies, guidelines and standards.

*As there is no consensus "on the basis of representation on a regional board (e.g., population) or what kind of representation (elected or appointed)" (*October 26, 1990, Growth Management Action Guidelines*, page 8) and each major regional ILO has a different perspective on this issue, reflecting the approach to regional decisions in their respective areas, LWVC supports state authorization of the option for each region to determine how to structure their respective regional body for handling growth management.

## HOMELESSNESS ACTION POLICY

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 2020

**Action Policy in Brief**: The League of Women Voters of California supports actions to reduce and eliminate homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered, throughout the State. We support:

- equal opportunity for access to housing with no barriers on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.
- programs and policies to assist those who are experiencing homelessness, or about to become homeless, so their basic human needs can be met.
- supportive services, including effective case management, job training, domestic violence services, and treatment for physical and mental health, as well as substance use disorder, to help people experiencing homelessness succeed in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.
- building of shelters, permanent supportive housing, and low-income/very low-income/extremely low-income housing for those who are experiencing homelessness.
- an increased stock of affordable housing to decrease the number at risk of becoming homeless.
- educating the public about people experiencing homelessness and their needs, and the services and support that are effective.
- promotion of cost-effective prevention services to assist those on the edge of becoming homeless from losing their housing.
- facilities and venues to meet the basic needs of people experiencing homelessness for personal hygiene, storage, and trash removal, as well as for safe spaces in which to live.
- rescission of policies, practices, regulations and laws that criminalize, penalize, or permit the harassment of people experiencing homelessness for engaging in necessary life activities in public spaces (e.g. sleeping, standing, camping, etc.).
- using a variety of crisis response and housing interventions to meet the needs of persons coming into the homeless system or who are at risk of homelessness.
- policies and programs to provide income assistance to lower income families and individuals.

# OFFSHORE OIL/GAS EXPLORATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND PRODUCTION ACTION POLICY

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 1983; Revised 1988, 1994

The League of Women Voters believes that policies, procedures and regulations governing offshore oil and gas activities should support the goal of wise management of resources in the public interest, with a high level of protection of the environment. Decisions on leasing, exploration, production, transport and abandonment must be the result of a process that provides opportunity for full citizen participation and that recognizes the appropriate role of local agencies.

The orderly and prudent development of petroleum resources must be guided by national and state energy policies that recognize those resources as finite. We urge a decreasing reliance on fossil fuels and an increasing emphasis on conservation and renewable energy sources. Because of this and because of the impacts on the California coast that would result from increased offshore oil/gas activities, the League calls for a long-term suspension of both lease sales and new projects in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) and state Tidelands.

**In brief, LWVC recommends the following:**

1. Mechanisms for full participation by the public and affected governmental entities in decisions;
2. If lease sales do occur, phased sales in small planning areas
3. Recognition of conflicting uses and the exclusion of sensitive areas
4. Updated conditions attached to any extension of existing leases
5. Cumulative impact analyses specific to each area at risk and to include impacts on natural resources, land use and socioeconomics
6. Comprehensive listing of mitigations for identified impacts
7. EIRs and EISs that are clear, succinct and understandable by the general public with at least 60 days for response
8. Full compliance with—and enforcement of—environmental regulations; frequent monitoring of all activities and periodic review and evaluation
9. Transport of product by environmentally sound pipeline whenever possible
10. Oil spill response plans that are strong and effective
11. Consistency and coordination between federal, state and local government policies
12. Sharing of revenues (federal and state) with state and local governments
13. Suspension of lease sales and new projects until state and national energy policies stressing conservation and alternative energies are in place; and it has been clearly established that the production of California offshore oil and gas is worth the risks involved.

## EXPANDED POSITION STATEMENT

The following paragraphs further explain the previous points:

1. ***Participation in Decisions:*** Administrative mechanisms must allow effective participation by the public and concerned government agencies in all phases of oil development. The process should enhance public response and coordination among levels of government. Information must be readily accessible to the affected communities. The public must be permitted sufficient time to analyze information and prepare a response.
2. ***Phased Sales In Small Planning Areas:*** Planning areas should be of a size that allows impacts on specific areas to be studied and understood. Sales should be phased at a pace that allows prudent development and management of resources and a low level of impact on affected communities. Attention must also be given to the conservation of our finite gas and oil reserves for long-term availability.
3. ***Recognition of Conflicting Uses and Exclusion of Sensitive Areas:*** Outer Continental Shelf and Tidelands policies and procedures must acknowledge the importance of other uses of the California coast. There are crucial conflicts between some of these uses and oil and gas development. The potential loss of other uses

due to oil development or oil spill damage is real. Some areas must be deleted from development consideration because they are areas of biological, recreational, environmental or economic importance, or because they are in hazard zones.

The California Coastal Commission and the State of California have already identified areas where offshore petroleum leasing and development can and cannot take place consistent with the California Coastal Act and existing law. The California Coastal Management Program (CCMP) does allow offshore petroleum development in areas near existing petroleum or other industrial developments. The CCMP does not allow such development in other areas such as scenic undeveloped coastal areas, special marine life breeding areas, and areas of potential vessel traffic hazards. In addition, many sensitive areas are being protected by various moratoriums, sanctuaries and local or federal laws.

There are additional sensitive areas that may require special protection. These include tracts within offshore nuclear waste dumps, within prime fishing areas, fish nurseries and/or upwelling areas, and buffer zones to protect sensitive areas.

4. ***Extension of Existing Leases:*** Any extension of an existing lease should require that the most recent stipulations and conditions on leasing should apply to the reinstated lease.
5. ***Cumulative Impact Analysis:*** Decisions on exploration and development must be based on a comprehensive analysis of cumulative impacts from preceding California oil and gas lease sales and projects. Collection of baseline data and study of impacts must be specific to the area impacted. Decisions on leasing and development must demonstrate thorough analysis of impacts and show that purposeful efforts to mitigate impacts are included in the decision.
6. ***Comprehensive Listing of Mitigations:*** A comprehensive listing of all mitigation measures required for the identified social, economic and environmental impacts must be available to the public and decision makers.
7. ***Standards for Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement Information:*** EIRs and EISs and supplements must be clear, succinct and organized in a way that makes the information easily retrievable and understandable to the public. They must be readily available and at least 60 days must be provided for responses.
8. ***Enforcement to Ensure Full Compliance:*** Full compliance with federal, state and local regulations, orders and stipulations must be guaranteed by effective enforcement and adequate funding, including a program for regular monitoring and periodic review and evaluation throughout the life of the project.
9. ***Transport of Products by Environmentally Sound Pipeline:*** Transport through pipeline has been shown to be less susceptible to large oil spills than tankering. If a spill occurs, a well-designed pipeline should allow only a relatively small amount to escape before shutdown. New pipelines should be constructed and operated for maximum protection of the environment; old pipelines should be evaluated for safety and brought up to current standards. If tankers or railroad cars are used, they must be stringently regulated.
10. ***Effective Oil Spill Response Plans:*** Oil spill response plans must emphasize the prevention of spills, assign responsibility for clean-ups, and require adequate compensation for liability. Federal, state and local agencies should produce integrated plans that establish a clear lead agency and require the use of best achievable technology for clean-ups. Prompt reporting and updating of spills should be required, with major penalties for failure to do so.
11. ***Consistency and Coordination Between Federal, State and Local Governments:*** The resources being developed are in both federal and state jurisdictions that are separated by an arbitrary boundary line—the three-mile limit. Support facilities usually—and drill sites occasionally—are onshore under local jurisdiction. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that policies of the various governmental entities be developed through a process that fosters consistency among them. Where policies differ, those which provide the highest level of protection should prevail.

    Additionally, the programs of the various agencies should be coordinated and, where possible, integrated. For example, single

project development of adjacent tracts in federal and state waters would usually be preferable to multiple projects. Also, Leagues in California should be aware of the far-reaching effects of oil and gas development on the entire Pacific Coast.

12. ***Revenue Sharing:*** All revenues derived from lease sales and development of oil and gas resources must be shared with affected state and local governments. Such funds are used to assist agencies to participate in the public review process, to assess onshore and offshore impacts, and to require and monitor appropriate mitigations. State fiscal policies should include the mitigation of economic and social impacts on local communities during planning, construction, operation, and removal of oil and gas projects.

**CONCLUSION**

The California Outer Continental Shelf and Tidelands contain complex, diverse and unique ecosystems that are impacted by a vast array of human activities. Our coastal resources must not be sacrificed to short-sighted energy policies and short-term economic gain. Offshore oil and gas development should proceed only when adequate safeguards are in place and the development is paced so as to assure long-term availability of the resource. Also, development should occur within the framework of state and national energy policies that stress the increasing use of conservation and renewable energy sources and a decreasing reliance on fossil fuels. In the absence of these conditions we call for a long-term suspension of offshore oil and gas lease sales and development. Ongoing activities should be consistent with the policies and procedures outlined above.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACTION POLICY

Adopted at Convention 1999

This LWVC policy may be used by ILOs and local Leagues at their respective levels.

The concept of Sustainability is implicit in the Principles of the League of Women Voters. League positions are in compliance with the fundamental principle of sustainability, recognizing the interdependency among issues of public policy, and the impact of current decisions on the global welfare of future generations.

"Sustainable thinking" calls for integrating the goals of the separate League program areas. As a result, the problems or issues to be resolved may be seen in a different light, and new means of resolution may be indicated.

**DEFINITION: Sustainable communities** recognize their interdependence with the global community and seek to meet current economic, environmental, and social demands through equitable and democratic means without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In sustainable communities, levels of pollution, consumption, and population size are in keeping with regional carrying capacity; their members share an ethic of responsibility to one another and to future generations; the full social and environmental costs of production, provision, and disposal of goods and services are acknowledged; their systems of governance and leadership encourage democratic deliberation; and their systems of urban planning enhance neighborhood livability and preserve ecological integrity.

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

Sustainability refers to the dynamic among ecological, economic, and social systems on a global scale. It demands consideration of the interactions among positions in different program areas. League positions speak of preservation and conservation, of stewardship, of considering long-term benefits and meeting future needs.

*Principles of sustainability are reflected in most program areas,* although often they are implicit rather than explicit:

With respect to **government,** positions support policies that promote equity, flexibility, and responsibility so that democratic government is encouraged and protected.

With respect to **natural resources**, positions support protection and wise management in the public interest to promote an environment beneficial to life.

(For more explicit support, see *LWVC Water*, references to future needs, assessment of economic, social, and environmental costs, as in #1a and #1f; "carrying capacity" as in #3d; references to interdependency and sustainability.)

With respect to **social policy**, positions promote the equity, justice, education, and nurturing essential to a sustainable society.

**Using League Positions**

Sustainability has many definitions with a common theme: meeting the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. In focusing on the complex interrelationship among Earth's systems, the concept ties together many League positions and reiterates League program goals.

**Sustainable development** depends on the integration of social, economic, and environmental goals.

**Sustainable governing policies** and practices recognize the interdependence of environmental, social, and economic impacts, and provide for long-term protection of natural and social resources. These interrelationships are reflected in the use of "*full-cost accounting*" that assesses all direct and indirect economic, environmental and social costs of production and programs.

**Sustainable governance decisions** are based on comprehensive information and evaluation and encourage public and individual responsibility for maintaining a healthy ecology.

**Democratic sustainable governance** relies upon public participation in decision making.

**Integrating League Positions**

For purposes of clarity and depth, League studies have traditionally focused on specific, and deliberately narrowed topics. The resulting positions often omit consideration of interrelationships or, at least, leave them unstated. Action decisions, therefore, may involve examination of a number of relevant positions and consideration of overlapping issues and impacts. It may be necessary to set priorities and make choices among competing near-term objectives. Long-term goals should not be in competition.

**Aspects of Sustainability Not Directly Addressed**

League positions, in general, do not speak to the application of limits. Although the need to conserve nonrenewable resources is recognized (LWVUS Natural Resources), and the global impact of population pressures is mentioned (LWVUS International Development Assistance), the effects on society of generally unlimited levels of population and resource consumption in the United States are not addressed. Desirable levels, or limits of population, economic growth, or of individual, national, or global consumption are not directly addressed in League positions.

Existing positions may be used in areas that impact population and consumption, as, for example, under reproductive choices, growth management, and energy conservation positions. However, to take action with respect to limits on population, growth, or consumption, further study leading to new positions would be needed.

**Local Uses of the Policy**

Local Leagues may look for sustainable development in their cities and counties, for example, by monitoring general plans and ordinances for integration of the "three e's": environment, economy, and equity; by analyzing school board actions affecting equity and quality of education; by evaluating health care accessibility, etc. Also, by advocating broad-based participation in determining indicators (all the players at the table), Leagues can promote equitable community planning.

**Measuring Sustainability: *Indicators***

Progress toward achieving community sustainability can be measured by monitoring changes in selected characteristics, or indicators.

These should be quantifiable, readily available, and easily understood, such as levels of air pollution, crowding of school, rates of infant mortality, etc. Indicators are necessarily oriented to the needs of the community in question. Broad-based community involvement in identifying important indicators is a crucial step in achieving social equity. It is a way of recognizing that different issues may be important to different segments of the population. (For examples of indicators, and additional details on their selection and application, see the *LWVC Sustainability Task Force Report*, April 1998.)

**Background**

This Action Policy statement, resulting from the work of the LWVC Task Force on Sustainable Communities (1997 to 1998), is based on:

- Review of state positions as listed in the LWVC *1995-1997 Positions Folder*
- Review of national positions as listed in the LWVUS *1996-1998 Impact on Issues*
- Review of the report of the U.S. President's Council on Sustainable Development (1996)
- Survey of members of local Leagues in California (1998-1999).

**History of the Concept**

**1972:** The UN held the first conference on Human Development in Stockholm. The concept of sustainable development emerged from concerns of developing countries about the overconsumption and waste in developed countries.

**1987:** The UN convened the World Commission on Environment and Development which wrote the report, "Our Common Future" (also referred to as the Brundtland Report). This report emphasizes the links between growth, economics, technology, and the environment. Sustainable development is recommended as a solution to worldwide resource degradation and the resulting threat of economic collapse. The Brundtland Report was the first to define sustainable development.

**1992:** The UN Conference on Environmental Development met and addressed the gross inequities that still existed between developed and developing nations and declared that the capacity of the Earth's ability to provide resources and handle wastes was fast approaching its limits. The Earth Summit created "Action 21," a plan for the 90's and beyond, which included strategies to halt environmental degradation and to promote sustainable development in all countries.

**1995:** The U.S. President's Council on Sustainable Development made policy recommendations that included the education of citizens about consumer practices that lead to more sustainable lifestyles.

The President's Council on Sustainable Development identified goals or "shared aspirations" necessary for achieving sustainability and organized them into ten categories: *

- Health and the Environment
- Economic Prosperity
- Equity
- Conservation of Nature
- Stewardship
- Sustainable Communities
- Civic Engagement
- Population
- International Responsibility
- Education

The Council warned that these categories "are truly interdependent and flow from the Council's understanding that *it is essential to seek economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity together. The achievement of any one goal is not enough to ensure that future generations will have at least the same opportunities to live and prosper that this generation enjoys: all are needed*."

*LWVC's *Sustainability Task Force Report* issued to local Leagues in 1998 cites the specific League positions that support these goals.

## WASTE-TO-ENERGY PLANTS: ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 1987; Revised 2006

The following guidelines were adopted in 1987 by the LWVC board of directors to assist local Leagues and the LWVC legislative committee in making decisions regarding waste-to-energy plants. They were updated by the board in May 2006.

Waste-to-energy plants (WTE) designed to convert solid waste (garbage), can reduce reliance on land fill sites as well as provide an alternative energy source. Hazardous materials incineration is NOT COVERED by these guidelines.

Environmentally sound waste-to-energy technologies should be considered the preferred alternative to landfill disposal as even the best designed landfill sites emit 50 percent or more of the gaseous emissions formed by degradation of the waste into the atmosphere. The predominant emission from landfills is methane—a potent greenhouse gas.

Natural Resources positions should be used in concert in order to cover all the environmental issues that may be involved. We urge local Leagues to use LWVC positions on Air Quality, Land Use, Energy, Solid Waste, Water, and Growth Management Policy as well as LWVUS Natural Resources positions. We are indebted to LWV Los Angeles County for their assistance.

1. The League supports the concept of environmentally sound waste-to-energy plants, both as an alternative to land disposal and as a form of resource recovery.
2. To minimize the need for waste-to-energy plants and other waste disposal facilities and their attendant environmental impacts, increased efforts must be made in waste reduction at the source and recycling after use—including mandatory curbside trash separation.
3. The League is opposed to relaxation of air quality standards, regulations or enforcement in order to accommodate waste-to-energy plants. Continuous or frequent monitoring should be done not only for criteria pollutants but for other toxic air contaminants listed by the Environmental Protection Agency, the Air Resources Board or other appropriate regulatory agencies.
4. Continuing research is needed on toxic air contaminants formed during the trash combustion process. As new information becomes available on toxicity and methods of pollution control, appropriate changes should be made in processing and equipment.
5. Siting criteria should be based on a comparative life cycle assessment of the environmental impacts associated with different waste treatment options. Criteria should include assurance that potential pollutants are not transferred from one environmental medium to another.
6. No region of the state should be required to bear an excessive burden of trash disposal that is grossly disproportionate to the waste generated in that particular area.

# WATER PRIVATIZATION CHECKLIST

Adopted by LWVC Board of Directors 2004

This checklist is provided to Leagues for use in evaluating water privatization proposals. In using this checklist, Leagues will want to weigh the positive impacts of "yes" answers against the negative impacts of "no" answers. In cases where the positive impacts outweigh the negative impacts, Leagues could support a privatization proposal. In cases where the negative impacts outweigh the positive impacts, Leagues could oppose the proposal. The "N/A" column will allow Leagues to identify those checklist items that do not apply to the proposal they are considering. In cases where a League checks items "N/A," they will work with a reduced set of checklist items.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Does the proposal benefit the environment? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal require coordination of water and land use planning without encouraging growth? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal protect the natural environment in areas of water origin and water use? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal avoid policies that build up demand and establish rigid patterns of use? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal provide for coordination of groundwater and surface water? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal provide for assessment of economic, social and environmental costs and benefits of the water project? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal have documents that present clear, concise information, readily available to the public? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal ensure high water quality standards for end users? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal have a water conservation component as part of its plan? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal take into account the carrying capacity of the appropriate basin? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal protect low- or fixed-income water users by lifeline rates? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal allow government to exercise a stewardship function? | Yes | No | N/A |
| Does the proposal allow participation by all relevant levels of government? | Yes | No | N/A |

# LWVUS POSITIONS IN BRIEF

## LWVUS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IN BRIEF

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.**

### Voting Rights

**Citizen's Right to Vote**. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

**DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation**. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

### Election Process

**Apportionment**. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

**Redistricting**. Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

**Money in Politics**. Support campaign finance/MIP regulations that enhances political equality for all citizens, ensures transparency, protects representative democracy from distortion by undisclosed contributions and big money, and combats corruption and undue influenced in government. Support campaign spending that is restricted but not banned. Supports public financing, full disclosure, abolishing SuperPACs, and creating an effective enforcement agency.

**Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

**Voter Representation/Electoral Systems.** Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters.

### Citizen Rights

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation**. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

### Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals and Constitutional Conventions

**Amendment Proposals**. Consider whether a proposal addresses matters of abiding importance, makes our political system more democratic, protects individual rights, could be achieved by constitutional amendment or legislative proposal, and is consistent with other League positions.

**Constitutional Conventions.** Hold Constitutional Conventions only when certain conditions are in place, such as: limited to a specific topic, full transparency, delegates selected by population, and voting by delegates not by states.

**Individual Liberties**. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

### Congress and the Presidency

**Congress**. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability, effective performance, and transparency.

**The Presidency.** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

### Privatization

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

## LWVUS NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS IN BRIEF

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

### Resource Management & Protection

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Promote resource conservation, stewardship, and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government. Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

**Air Quality.** Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

**Energy.** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

**Land Use.** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship. Transfer of Federal Public Lands. Promote policies that Federal public lands should remain under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

**Water.** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater, and drinking water, and set up a process to evaluate inter-basin water transfers.

**Waste Management.** Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

**Nuclear**. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

### Climate Change

Support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

### Public Participation

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

### Agriculture Policy

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

**Federal Agriculture Policies**. Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide adequate safety of our food supply.

## LWVUS SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS IN BRIEF

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

### Equality of Opportunity

**Equal Rights**. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. Support equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

**Education, Employment and Housing**. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

### Federal Role in Public Education

Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.

### Fiscal Policy

**Tax Policy**. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

**Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.

**Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

### Health Care

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents, including behavioral health that is integrated with and achieves parity with the physical health care system.

### Immigration

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

### Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Income Assistance.** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

**Support Services**. Provide for essential support services.

**Housing**. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

### Childcare

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it.

### Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

### Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

### Gun Policy

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

### Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

### Death Penalty

The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.

### Sentencing policy

The LWVUS supports the exploration and utilization of alternatives to imprisonment, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

### Human Trafficking

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

## LWVUS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POSITIONS IN BRIEF

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

### United Nations

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

### Trade

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

**U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

**Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

**Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs

The League of Women Voters of California does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. It does, however, take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires:**

- competent personnel
- clear assignment of responsibilities
- adequate financing
- coordination among levels of government
- effective enforcement
- well defined channels for citizen input and review.