



**FOR PROGRAM
ACTION**
2023-2025

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INTRODUCTION

The **PROGRAM FOR ACTION** is the implementation of LWV Principles and public policy position statements. Some positions are adopted at the national level by LWV US. Others are adopted by LWV Minnesota. The public policy position statements serve as the basis for the national, state and local Leagues to take action. A League typically may not take action unless there is a position that has been formally adopted that supports the action. Position statements are usually adopted at Convention after lengthy study and consensus by League members; sometimes they are adopted by concurrence with another League's position.

National action to the federal government or a member of Congress is directed by, or must be authorized by, LWV US. Action concerning the state government, including the Governor, a state agency, or the state legislature, must be authorized by LWV Minnesota. **Local LWVs may only take action on federal or state advocacy only when authorized by LWV US or LWV Minnesota.**

If you have questions about how action is authorized, or would like to seek authorization for an action, please contact LWV Minnesota at info@lwvmn.org.

PRINCIPLES

The Principles are "concepts of government" to which the League subscribes. They authorize the adoption for national, state and local Program For Action. Any action on the Principles must be taken in conjunction with current League positions to which they apply and on which member agreement and understanding are known to exist. The Principles are rather broad when standing alone, so it is necessary to exercise caution when considering using them as a basis for action.

- LWV 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 believes that all powers of the US government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.
- LWV believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens 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.
- LWV believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- LWV 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.
- LWV believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; 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.
- LWV believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

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

Voting Rights

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

US: Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. (1982)

MN: Allow citizens living in the community on probation or parole to vote. (2013)

DC SELF-GOVERNMENT AND FULL VOTING REPRESENTATION

US: Citizens of the District of Columbia should be afforded the same rights of self-government and full voting representation in Congress as are all other citizens of the United States. LWVUS supports restoration of an annual, predictable federal payment to the District to compensate for revenues denied and expenses incurred because of the federal presence. (1982, 2000)

MN: No additional position.

The Election Process

CENSUS

US: No additional position.

MN: The Census of all persons be accurate and complete without bias toward any person based on religion, country of origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status or other potentially discriminatory factors. Achieving an accurate census also depends on it being adequately funded and led by qualified non-political officials.

APPORTIONMENT

US: The League of Women Voters believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population.

The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment. (1966, 1982)

MN: Support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local governmental bodies.

Support:

- Regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
 - › Compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group
 - › Public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action
 - › Prompt judicial review (1979)

REDISTRICTING

US: Responsibility for redistricting preferably should be vested in an independent special commission, with membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups.

Every redistricting process should include:

- Specific timelines for the steps leading to a redistricting plan
- Full disclosure throughout the process and public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption
 - › Redistricting at all levels of government must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process, and
 - › Should be subject to open meeting laws
- A provision that any redistricting plan should be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote.
 - › Remedial provisions established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. Specific provisions should be made for court review of redistricting measures and for courts to require the redistricting authority to act on a specific schedule.
 - › Time limits should be set for initiating court action for review.
 - › The courts should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met.

The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, and on which any plan should be judged, must:

- Be enforceable in court
- Require:
 - › Substantially equal population
 - › Geographic contiguity
 - › Effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities
- Provide for (to the extent possible):
 - › Promotion of partisan fairness
 - › Preservation and protection of "communities of interest"
 - › Respect for boundaries of municipalities and counties
- Compactness and competitiveness may also be considered as criteria so long as they do not conflict with the above criteria
- Explicitly reject:
 - › Protection of incumbents, through such devices as considering an incumbent's address
 - › Preferential treatment for a political party, through such devices as considering party affiliation, voting history and candidate residence. (2016)

MN: See Apportionment position.

MONEY IN POLITICS

US: The methods of financing political campaigns should:

- Enhance political equality for all citizens.
- Ensure maximum participation by citizens in the political process; protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns.
- Provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices; ensure transparency and the public's right to know who is using money to influence elections.
- Enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and combat corruption and undue influence in government.

Political corruption includes the following:

- A candidate or officeholder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor's interests in exchange for a campaign contribution.
- An officeholder or staff gives greater access to donors.
- An officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them.
- A candidate or office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given.
- The results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.

In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, the League supports:

- Public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits.
- Enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes changes to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed, and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process.
- Abolishing Super PACs and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate's own campaign committee)
- Restrictions on direct donations and bundling

by lobbyists, which may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.

Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed in order to meet the League's goals for protecting democratic processes. Among the different entities that spend money to influence elections, the League supports the following comparative limits:

- Higher spending limits for political parties, genuinely non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the-vote organizations and activities, and candidates' spending money raised from contributors
- Mid-level spending limits for individual citizens (including wealthy individuals), Political Action Committees (with funds contributed by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members and volunteers), and candidates spending their own money
- Lower spending limits for trade associations, labor unions and non-profit organizations from their general treasury funds
- Severely restricted spending by for-profit organizations spending from their corporate treasury funds
- No limits on spending by bona fide newspapers, television, and other media, including the Internet, except to address partisan abuse or use of the media to evade campaign finance regulations

This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office: presidential and congressional, primaries as well as general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns. (2016)

MN: No additional position.

SELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

US: The direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for election of the president until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished.

The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the

presidential election system from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information. (1970, 1982, 2004, 2010)

MN: No additional position.

VOTER REPRESENTATION / ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

US: Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices.

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.
- Implement alternatives to plurality voting.
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail.

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

The LWVUS 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. (2020)

MN: No additional position.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

MN: Support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

Support:

- Centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials (1961)
- Extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration (1961)
- Extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration (1972)
- Rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots (1972)

US: No specific position.

SELECTION OF JUDGES

US: No specific position.

MN: (a) Initial appointment of judgeship by the governor, who must choose from among a list of qualified candidates forwarded by a nominating commission. (b) End-of-term evaluation of the judge's performance by an evaluation commission, results to be made available to the public. (c) Retention election: voters choose to retain or not retain the judge. (2008)

Rationale:

- Appointment by the governor assures that new judges will be highly qualified and assures a role for the public on the commission. The commission should be broadly based and nonpartisan.
- End-of-term evaluation provides voters with good information when they vote for judges. It assures a role for the public both in submitting information to the commission and in serving on the commission; the commission should be broadly based and nonpartisan.
- A retention election gives the voting public the final word as to whether or not a judge should be kept in office. The merit selection/retention system has shown itself best at keeping politics and money out of elections. For those groups wishing to oust a judge there is a major

disincentive: they cannot choose the judge's replacement.

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Detail:

- As long as the current system for judicial selection prevails, LWVMN strongly favors retaining the incumbency designation on judicial ballots. (1999)

SYSTEMS OF VOTING

US: No specific position.

MN: (see below)

Support:

- The option to use ranked choice voting (a.k.a., instant runoff voting) to elect State or Local Officials in single seat elections.
- Continued use of the plurality voting system in our elections. The LWVMN Board reserves the right to decide the appropriateness of legislation proposing to replace the plurality voting system with the ranked choice voting at the state level.
- The right of local governments and municipalities to choose Ranked Choice Voting for their own local elections. Voters need to understand how votes in an election are tabulated and how a candidate actually wins an election. If a change in elections systems occurs, LWVMN supports adequate voter education.

Oppose:

- Approval, Borda Count, or Condorcet as alternative voting systems. (2005)

INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

US: No specific position.

MN: Support the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; oppose most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

Support:

- Continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory)
- Continued compulsory voter referenda on constitutional amendments
- Strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on
- Time span for collecting signatures
- Eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions
- Percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures
- Size of vote required for passage

- Procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum
- Contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns (1980)

Oppose:

- Direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes
- Optional and compulsory referenda on statutes; no agreement on petition referenda on statutes
- Voter recall of members of the legislature and state constitutional officers, no agreement on recall of judges or appointed officials

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW / CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

US: Democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (1984)

MN: No additional position.

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES

US: The individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged. (1982)

MN: No additional position.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSALS

US: The League of Women Voters will only support a proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution if it advances and conforms to a LWWUS position.

In addition, the League believes the following should be considered in identifying an appropriate and well-crafted constitutional amendment:

- Whether the public policy objective addresses matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of our nation must be changed. Amendments are changes to a document that provides stability to our system and should be undertaken to address extreme problems or long-term needs.
- Whether the amendment as written would be effective in achieving its policy objective. Amendments that may be unenforceable, miss the objective, or have unintended consequences may not achieve the policy objective.
- Whether the amendment would either make our political system more democratic or protect individual rights. Most adopted amendments have sought to make our system

more representative or to protect the rights of minorities.

- Whether the public policy objective can be achieved by a legislative or political approach that is less difficult than a constitutional amendment. In order to expend resources wisely, it is important to consider whether legislation or political action is more likely to succeed than an amendment.
- Whether the public policy objective is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach. It is important to consider whether the goal can best be achieved by an overall value statement, which will be interpreted by the courts, or with specific statutory detail to resolve important issues and reduce ambiguity. (2016)

MN: No additional position.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS

US: The League of Women Voters is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. The League believes that such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

- The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on.
- Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population.
- Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes.
- The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a "runaway convention" which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states.
- Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is

sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process.

- The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress. (2016)

MN: No additional position.

PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

US: Public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

MN: No additional position.

Congress and the Presidency

CONGRESS

US: Structures and practices of the U.S. Congress must be characterized by openness, accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance. Responsive legislative processes must meet these criteria:

- ACCOUNTABILITY - A Congress responsive to citizens and able to hold its own leaders, committees and members responsible for their actions and decisions
- REPRESENTATIVENESS - A Congress whose leaders, committees and members represent the nation as a whole, as well as their own districts and states
- DECISION MAKING CAPABILITY - A Congress with the knowledge, resources and power to make decisions that meet national needs and reconcile conflicting interests and priorities
- EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE - A Congress able to function in an efficient manner with a minimum of conflict, wasted time and duplication of effort
- OPEN GOVERNMENT - A Congress whose proceedings in committee as well (1972, 1982)

MN: Support improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local government districts.

Support:

- Legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research

assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess (1955, 1968)

- A post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature (1955)
- Changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature (1970)
- Measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification (1947, 1962)

Oppose:

- Unicameral legislature (1999)

THE PRESIDENCY

US: Presidential power should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a dynamic balance between the executive and legislative branches. Accountability and responsibility to the people require that unnecessary secrecy between the President and Congress be eliminated. Therefore, the League supports the following measures:

- EXECUTIVE AGREEMENTS - Presidential authority to negotiate international executive agreements should be preserved. Accountability to the public requires that the President report to Congress the text of all such agreements and that Congress review them periodically.
- WAR POWERS - The President should be required to seek the advice of the Congress before introducing U.S. armed forces into situations where hostilities are imminent, to report promptly to Congress any action taken, and to obtain within a specified time congressional approval for continued military activity.
- EMERGENCY POWERS - Presidential authority to declare a state of national emergency should be subject to periodic congressional review. The President should transmit to Congress yearly notice of all existing national emergencies and significant orders issued under each. Congress should review the emergencies and significant orders issued under each. Congress should review the emergencies every six months and

- should have the power to terminate them at any time by concurrent resolution. All states of emergency now in existence should be terminated after a grace period for adjustment.
- FISCAL POWERS - The President should exercise executive responsibility for sound management of public funds in a manner consistent with the programs and priorities established by Congress. This requires procedures for congressional consideration of the budget as a whole and measures for congressional disapproval of presidential impoundment of funds.
- SUCCESSION AND TENURE - The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the succession procedures spelled out in the 25th Amendment. However, the League favors a limit on the amount of time Congress may take to confirm the Vice-President. The League also favors retention of a two-term limitation on presidential terms of office. (1976, 1982)

MN: No additional position.

Privatization

PRIVATIZATION

US: When governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Further, the League believes that transparency, accountability, and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

The League believes that some government provided services could be delivered more efficiently by private entities; however, privatization is not appropriate in all circumstances. Privatization is not appropriate when the provision of services by the government is necessary to preserve the common good, to protect national or local security or to meet the needs of the most vulnerable members of society. While the League recognizes that the definition of core government services will vary by level of government and community values, services fundamental to the governance of a democratic society should not be privatized in their entirety. These services include the electoral process, justice system, military, public safety, public health, education, transportation, environmental

protection and programs that protect and provide basic human needs.

The decision to privatize a public service should be made after an informed, transparent planning process and thorough analysis of the implications of privatizing service delivery. While specific criteria will vary by service and local conditions, the League believes the following considerations apply to most decisions to transfer public services, assets and functions to the private sector:

- On-going and timely communication with stakeholders and the public
- Statement of the circumstances as they exist and what is to be gained
- Definition of the quality, level and cost of service expected
- Assessment of the private market; whether there are providers to assure competitive pricing and delivery recognizing that in some cases, there may not be multiple providers if a service is specialized (e.g., high tech, airports)
- Cost-benefit analyses evaluating short and long term costs of privatization, including the ongoing costs of contract administration and oversight

- An understanding of the impact on customers, the broader community, environment and public employees
- An open, competitive bidding process with clearly defined criteria to be used in selecting a contractor
- A provision and process to ensure the services or assets will be returned to the government if a contractor fails to perform
- A data-driven selection of private entities whose goals, purposes, and means are not incompatible with the public well-being
- The careful negotiation and drafting of the controlling privatization contract
- Adequate oversight and periodic performance monitoring of the privatized services by the government entity to ensure that the private entity is complying with all relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

The League believes that the enactment of state laws and issuance of regulations to control the process and delivery of privatization within a state's

jurisdiction is often appropriate and desirable. Best practices for government regulation of the privatization process should include the following requirements:

- An open process that allows for citizen input and oversight in a timely manner
- A reasonable feasibility study and project evaluation appropriate to the size and scope of the project
- The establishment of carefully crafted criteria for selection of the private-entity (beyond the lowest cost bid)
- Additional consideration for local bidders in order to support the local economy
- The retention of liability and responsibility with the government entity
- Allowance for and promotion of opportunities for innovation and collaboration
- Provision for employment, benefits and training plans on behalf of employees displaced as a result of privatization. (2012)

MN: No additional position.

Local News and Democracy

LOCAL NEWS AND DEMOCRACY

US: No specific position

MN: LWVMN believes it is the responsibility of government to provide support for conditions under which credible local journalism can survive and thrive. We define local news as accurate, in-depth coverage of government entities, including but not limited to: city councils, county councils, county board of commissioners, health departments, schools and school boards.

LWVMN believes:

- Credible and ethical local journalism, in whatever format it is published, as essential to our democracy.
- Efforts to ensure everyone has access to information necessary for casting an informed ballot and believes that local news sources are integral to that pursuit.
- Support for the viability of local news may take a variety of forms. Control of the content must remain exclusively with the news organization.

- Media literacy and news education, including support for journalism students, are essential. These opportunities should be expanded in schools and throughout communities.
- Everyone should have access to comprehensive, credible local news and that barriers to access should be removed. These barriers include, but are not limited to geography, economic status, and education.

Digital Equity

DIGITAL EQUITY

US: High-speed affordable internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all US residents and businesses. National, state, and local government policies should support broadband, wireless, and other means of high-speed internet deployment throughout the nation.

Efficient, high-speed, affordable access to the internet for all US residents in their homes, schools, and workplaces — regardless of geographic location or neighborhood demographics — is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, communicating with legislative leaders, engaging in political discourse, competing in the global marketplace, and assuring that voters receive the information they need to participate in our democracy.

The League of Women Voters supports making high-speed internet access available to all residents of the United States, without charge, through schools, libraries, and other secure public buildings.

MN: No additional position.

COMMUNITY ACCESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MEDIA

US: The League of Women Voters believes that community access media – for public, educational, and governmental programming (PEG) – must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded, regardless of the provider of media services. Statewide public affairs programming must be adequately protected, promoted, and funded by state legislatures and available to all residents, regardless of the provider of media services. Government should provide opportunities for citizen participation in decisions regarding community access, or PEG media.

Access to public affairs programming through modern media communication is essential to the public interest and to the League of Women Voters' mission and purpose — to protect civil liberties, ensure open, transparent government, and promote the public's right to know. To protect the public interest, high-quality PEG transmission and PEG availability on basic service tiers and on the internet are essential. (2022)

MN: No additional position.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

LWVMN does not act on international relations because that role is reserved for LWVUS. Below is a summary of the positions. For more detail, refer to the resources available from LWVUS at lww.org.

International Relations

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.

NATURAL RESOURCES

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

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

Resource Management

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

US: The League of Women Voters believes resource management decisions must be based on a thorough assessment of population growth and of current and future needs. The inherent characteristics and carrying capacities of each area's natural resources must be considered in the planning process. Policy makers must take into account the ramifications of their decisions on the nation as a whole as well as on other nations.

To assure the future availability of essential resources, government policies must promote stewardship of natural resources. Policies that promote resource conservation are a fundamental part of such stewardship. Resources such as water and soil should be protected. Consumption of nonrenewable resources should be minimized. Beneficiaries should pay the costs for water, land and energy development projects. Reclamation and reuse of natural resources should be encouraged.

The League believes that protection and management of natural resources are responsibilities shared by all levels of government. The federal government should provide leadership, guidance and financial assistance to encourage regional planning and decision making to enhance local and state capabilities for resource management.

The League supports comprehensive long-range planning and believes that wise decision-making requires:

- Adequate data and a framework within which alternatives may be weighed and intelligent decisions made
- Consideration of environmental, public-health, social and economic impacts of proposed plans and actions
- Protection of private property rights commensurate with overall consideration of public health and environmental protection
- Coordination of the federal government's responsibilities and activities
- Resolution of inconsistencies and conflicts in basic policy among governmental agencies at all levels
- Regional, interregional and/or international cooperation when appropriate
- Mechanisms appropriate to each region that will provide coordinated planning and administration among units of government, governmental agencies and the private sector
- Procedures for resolving disputes
- Procedures for mitigation of adverse impacts
- Special responsibility by each level of government for those lands and resources entrusted to them
- Special consideration for the protection of areas of critical environmental concern, natural hazards, historical importance and aesthetic value
- Special attention to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of urban communities.

MN: No additional position.

US: The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment. The League's approach to environmental protection and pollution control is one of problem solving. The interrelationships of air, water, and land resources should be recognized in designing environmental safeguards. The League's environmental protection and anti-pollution goals aim to prevent ecological degradation and to reduce and control pollutants before they go down the sewer, up the chimney, or into the landfill.

The League believes that although environmental protection and pollution control are responsibilities shared by all levels of government, it is essential that the federal government provide leadership and technical and financial assistance.

The federal government should have the major role in setting standards for environmental protection and pollution control. Other levels of government should have the right to set more stringent standards. Enforcement should be carried out at the lower levels of government, but the federal government should enforce standards if other levels of government do not meet this responsibility. Standards must be enforced in a timely, consistent, and equitable manner for all violators in all parts of society, including governmental units, industry, business, and individuals.

Environmental protection and pollution control, including waste management, should be considered a cost of providing a product or service. Consumers, taxpayers and ratepayers must expect to pay some of the costs. The League supports policies that accelerate pollution control, including federal financial assistance for state and local programs.

The League supports:

- Regulation of pollution sources by control and penalties.
- Inspection and monitoring.
- Full disclosure of pollution data.
- Incentives to accelerate pollution control.
- Vigorous enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions for states and localities that do not comply with federal standards and substantial fines for noncompliance.

AIR QUALITY

US: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Measures to reduce vehicular pollution, including inspection and maintenance of emission controls, changes in engine design and fuel types and development of more energy-efficient transportation systems
- Regulation and reduction of pollution from stationary sources
- Regulation and reduction of ambient toxic-air pollutants
- Measures to reduce transboundary air pollutants, such as ozone and those that cause acid deposition.

MN: Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources, including development of more energy-efficient transportation systems.

ENERGY

US: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Energy goals and policies that acknowledge the United States as a responsible member of the world community
- Reduction of energy growth rates
- Use of a variety of energy sources, with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies
- The environmentally sound use of energy resources, with consideration of the entire cycle of energy production
- Predominant reliance on renewable resources
- Policies that limit reliance on nuclear fission
- Action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation through funding for research and development, financial incentives, rate-setting policies and mandatory standards
- Mandatory energy conservation measures, including thermal standards for building efficiency, new appliance standards and standards for new automobiles with no relaxation of auto-emission control requirements
- Policies to reduce energy demand and minimize the need for new generating capacity through techniques such as marginal cost or peak-load pricing or demand management programs

- Maintaining deregulation of oil and natural gas prices
- Assistance for low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on the poor.

MN: No additional position.

LAND USE

US: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Management of land as a finite resource not as a commodity, since land ownership, whether public or private, carries responsibility for stewardship
- Land-use planning that reflects conservation and wise management of resources
- Identification and regulation of areas of critical concern
 - Fragile or historical lands, where development could result in irreversible damage (e.g., shore lands of rivers, lakes and streams, estuaries and bays; rare or valuable ecosystems and geological formations; significant wildlife habitats; unique scenic or historic areas; wetlands; deserts)
 - Renewable resource lands, where development could result in the loss of productivity (e.g., watersheds, aquifers and aquifer-recharge areas, significant agricultural and grazing lands, forest lands)
 - Natural hazard lands, where development could endanger life and property (e.g., floodplains, areas with high seismic or volcanic activity, areas of unstable geologic, ice or snow formations)
- Reclamation of lands damaged by surface mining, waste disposal, overgrazing, timber harvesting, farming and other activities
- Acquisition of land for public use
- Identification and regulation of areas impacted by public or private investment where siting results in secondary environmental and socioeconomic impacts
- Review of environmental, social and economic impacts of major public and private developments
- Review of federally funded projects by all government levels
- Conformance of federal land resource activities with approved state programs, particularly where state standards are more stringent than federal standards.

MN: Support an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at

the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

Support a state plan that should:

- Be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways)
- Be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies
- Require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control
- Recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control
- Require impact statements of major public and private development
- Provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units
- Provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances
- Provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies (1975)

WATER RESOURCES

US: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, ground-water and surface water and that address the potential depletion or pollution of water supplies
- Measures to reduce water pollution from direct point-source discharges and from indirect nonpoint sources
- Policies to achieve water quality essential for maintaining species populations and diversity, including measures to protect lakes, estuaries, wetlands and instream flows
- Stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking water supplies, including protection of watersheds for surface supplies and of recharge areas for groundwater.

MN: Support a state role in the preservation and

management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

Support:

- State water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources
- Statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water
- Policies which:
 - › Recognize regional differences in supply and use.
 - › Integrate both ground and surface water management.
 - › Integrate quality and quantity management.
 - › Provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
 - › Consider future use (of water resources).
 - › Promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
 - › Provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
 - › Distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- A state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
 - › Continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
 - › Provide for education and technical assistance.
 - › Require specific conservation plans from those who propose inter-basin transfers.
 - › Provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- Water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices, as well as a rate structure which encourage conservation and user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management
- Inter-basin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs; decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects and conservation practices of the receiving basin
- Clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers, including at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:

- › Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers
- › Uniform legislation among Great Lakes states
- › Federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval
- › Interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions
- › Increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission procedures

Proposed Interbasin Water Transfers

Interstate and inter-basin transfers are not new or unusual. Water transfers have served municipal supplies, industry, energy development, and agriculture.

Construction costs of large-scale water transfers are high, and economic losses in the basin of origin also may be high. Environmental costs of water transfers may include quantitative and qualitative changes in wetlands and related fisheries and wildlife, diminished aquifer recharge, and reduced stream flows. Lowered water tables also may affect groundwater quality and cause land subsidence.

As we look to the future, water transfer decisions will need to incorporate the high costs of moving water, the limited availability of unallocated water, and our still-limited knowledge of impacts on the affected ecosystems.

To develop member understanding and agreement on proposals for large-scale water transfer projects, state and local Leagues need to work together. The following guidelines are designed to help Leagues jointly evaluate new proposals for large-scale water transfers.

The process for evaluating the suitability of new proposed inter-basin water transfers should include:

- › Ample and effective opportunities for informed public participation in the formulation and analysis of proposed projects.
- › Evaluation of economic, social, and environmental impacts in the basin of origin; the receiving area; and any area through which the diversion must pass, so that decision-makers and the public have adequate information on which to base a decision.
- › Examination of all short- and long-term economic costs including, but not limited to, construction, delivery, operation, maintenance, and market interest rate.
- › Examination of alternative supply options,

such as water conservation, water pricing, and reclamation.

- › Participation and review by all affected governments.
- › Procedures for resolution of inter-governmental conflicts.
- › Accord with international treaties.
- › Provisions to ensure that responsibility for funding is borne primarily by the user with no federal subsidy, loan guarantees, or use of the borrowing authority of the federal government, unless the proposal is determined by all affected levels of the League to be in the national interest.

GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM

US: No specific position.

MN: Supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin. (2013)

Details Protective Measures – Support:

- Limit uses of “fragile,” historical, cultural and scenic shoreline areas.
- Preserve wild and pristine areas within the watershed, with no new development in these habitats without adherence to federal, state, or local criteria.
- Provide for appropriate recreational opportunities in and public access to sensitive areas without destruction or harm to the ecosystem.
- Protect the quality of the air and waters of the ecosystem by strict adherence to zoning regulations that prohibit the introduction of polluting discharges or detrimental land use techniques.
- Protect the remaining dune formations. Enforce strict regulations of sand dune mining or development on the dunes.
- Strengthen upstream land management to eliminate sources of siltation and pollution.
- Control the invasion and spread of non-native aquatic and terrestrial nuisance species.

Threats to the Ecosystem – Oppose:

- Inefficient or excessive water uses. Proposals for new or increased withdrawals within the Basin should be carefully evaluated before being

permitted. Withdrawals should be regularly monitored for potential or actual damage to the ecosystem.

- Destruction of marshes and other wetlands throughout the watershed. Mitigation should be accepted only as a last resort. Mitigation proposals should be rigorously evaluated and projects should be strictly monitored to assure no net loss to the ecosystem.
- New or increased diversions or transfers by any means of Great Lakes waters and adjacent groundwaters to a place outside the Basin. Projects already in place should be carefully monitored and restricted if there is evidence of damage to the ecosystem.
- Dredging and filling of river inlets, harbors, lakes or wetlands except for tightly-controlled, non-degrading and non-repetitive activities.
- Discharge to air or water of toxic pollutants and other material from industrial, agricultural, residential or commercial operations that may damage the ecosystem in violation of laws and ordinances.

Public Participation – Support:

- Informed and responsible action on behalf of the preservation of the Great Lakes Ecosystem.
- Relevant information should be readily available to the public.
- Opportunities for public input should be timely, accessible, convenient and well-advertised.

Role of Government – Support:

- Coordination of functions among various governmental agencies charged with protecting the Great Lakes and elimination of unnecessary overlap.
- Use of area-wide coordinated management plans and techniques in the solving of Great Lakes Ecosystem problems.
- Participation by all affected governments in the Basin in review and decision-making on Great Lakes agreements and projects, facilitated in open meetings and hearings.
- Strengthening existing mechanisms for intergovernmental discussions and decision making.
- Separation of responsibility for submitting recommendations for governmental projects from issuing permits for such projects.
- Monitoring and enforcement of treaties, ordinances, laws and master plans.

Research Priorities:

- Effective, non-toxic control and removal of invasive aquatic and terrestrial species.

- Restoration of health to the overall resource.
- Survival of native aquatic and terrestrial species and their nutrient sources.
- Continual testing of Great Lakes water quality for impact from the following: pesticides and fertilizers, resistant bacteria, persistent pharmaceuticals and other chemicals.
- Evaluation of water accountability systems, groundwater monitoring and water use planning and conservation efforts throughout the Basin.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

US: The League of Women Voters supports:

- Policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes
- Policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes in order to protect public health and air, water and land resources
- Planning and decision making processes that recognize suitable solid and hazardous wastes as potential resources
- Policies for the management of civilian and military high- and low-level radioactive wastes to protect public health, and air, water and land resources
- The establishment of processes for effective involvement of state and local governments and citizens in siting proposals for treatment, storage, disposal and transportation of radioactive wastes
- Full environmental review of treatment, storage and disposal facilities for radioactive wastes
- Safe transport, storage and disposal of radioactive wastes.

Criteria For Siting Waste Disposal Facilities

The following criteria are derived from the League's Natural Resources positions. They were developed to assist state and local Leagues in reviewing specific waste disposal sites and to help state and local Leagues evaluate both the process employed in site selection and the suitability of a proposed site or hazardous and radioactive waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities. This decision-making process should provide for:

- Ample and effective opportunities for public participation, including funding to conduct such participation.
- Evaluation of economic, social, and environmental impacts so that decision-makers and the public have adequate information on

which to base a decision. In addition to the actual site, secondary land use impacts (e.g., buffer areas, adequacy of roads, sewers, water) should be considered.

- Examination of alternative sites and methods of treatment and disposal. Comparison of costs must include short- and long-term costs, such as liability insurance, postclosure maintenance, monitoring of ground and surface waters and air before and after closure, and potential loss of land or water resources due to contamination.
- Participation and review by all government levels to assure conformance with all adopted comprehensive plans at each level of government.
- Procedures for resolution of inter-governmental conflicts.
- Hazardous and radioactive waste treatment, storage, or disposal facilities should be sited in areas that pose the least amount of risk to the public and to sensitive environmental areas. They should be located away from areas of critical concern such as:
 - » Natural hazard areas subject to flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes, or subsidence.
 - » Drinking-water supply sources, such as reservoirs, lakes, and rivers and their watersheds, and aquifers and their recharge areas.
 - » Fragile land areas, such as shorelines of rivers, lakes, streams, oceans, estuaries, bays, or wetlands.
 - » Rare or valuable ecosystems or geologic formations, significant wildlife habitat, or unique scenic or historic areas.
 - » Areas with significant renewable resource value, such as prime agricultural lands or grazing and forest lands that would be destroyed as a result of the siting of hazardous waste facilities.
 - » Residential areas, parks, and schools.

MN: Support measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

Support:

- State governments taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills
- Measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers
- Flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management

to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards (1973)

NUCLEAR ISSUES

US: The League’s approach to nuclear issues is one of problem solving. The League’s aim is to work constructively for the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment and for citizen participation in the decision-making process at all levels of government.

The League opposes increased reliance on nuclear fission but recognizes its place in the nation’s energy mix. To achieve this objective:

- State and local Leagues may oppose licensing for construction of nuclear power plants based on the national position.
- State and local Leagues may oppose licensing for operation of these plants now under construction on a case-by-case basis, after careful consideration of the need for power and of available alternatives and after notifying the national board.

- State and local Leagues may support licensing for construction and operation of nuclear power plants only in special cases and only with prior permission from the national board.
- State and local Leagues may call for the closing of operating nuclear power plants because of specific nongeneric health and safety problems, but only with prior permission from LWWUS.

Please see LWW Impact on Issues (2022-2024) for LWWUS positions on Siting/Storage of High-Level Wastes (HLWs), Siting/Storage of Low-Level Wastes (LLWs), Appropriate State League Action, Transportation of Nuclear Wastes, Defense Wastes, & Inter-League Cooperation (pgs 100-102).

MN: No additional position.

Transfer of Federal Public Lands

TRANSFER OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

US: The League believes that federal public lands should benefit all Americans. The lands should remain under the jurisdiction of the federal government with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands and be managed according to the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield policy. We support improvements in management and regulation. Federal law allows for the sale or exchange of federal lands if it is in the public interest. Prior to any transfer, a comprehensive assessment that covers the following issues should be performed:

- Environmental analysis, including air and water quality, biodiversity, endangered and threatened species
- Health impacts
- Environmental justice
- Suitability of proposed land use
- Subsurface resources
- Financial and economic impacts
- Cultural resources

- Public access
- Management for fire and other natural disasters
- Consultation with tribal governments

The League is opposed to the sale of federal lands to private entities except for small tracts surrounded by nonfederal lands. The League is opposed to the transfer of subsurface rights to the state or other entities. Any development of subsurface rights on federal land should benefit all Americans. (2020)

MN: No additional position.

Climate Change

CLIMATE CHANGE

US: The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet. The League believes that an interrelated approach to combating climate change – including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources – is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem. The

League 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. Individuals, communities, and governments must continue to address this issue, while considering the ramifications of their decision, at all levels – local, state, regional, national, and global. (2019)

MN: No additional position.

Public Participation

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

US: The League of Women Voters believes public understanding and cooperation are essential to the responsible and responsive management of our nation's natural resources. The public has a right to know about pollution levels, dangers to health and the environment, and proposed resource management policies and options. The public has a right to participate in decision-making at each phase in the process and at each level of government involvement. Officials should make a special effort to develop readily understandable procedures for public involvement and to ensure that the public has adequate information to participate effectively. Public records should be readily accessible at all governmental levels. Adequate funding is needed to ensure opportunities for public education and effective public participation in all aspects of the decision-making process.

The appropriate level of government should publicize, in an extensive and timely manner and in readily available sources, information about pollution levels, pollution-abatement programs, and resource management policies and options. Hearings should be held in easily accessible locations, at convenient times and, when possible, in the area concerned. The hearing procedures and other opportunities for public comment should actively encourage citizen participation in decision-making.

The League supports public education that provides a basic understanding of the environment and the social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of environmental protection, pollution control and conservation. Mechanisms for citizen appeal must be guaranteed, including access to the courts. Due process rights for the affected public and private parties must be assured.

MN: No additional position.

Agriculture Policies

AGRICULTURE POLICIES

US: Federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally

sound and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices.

- **SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE** – Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves

toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and protect the country's human and natural agricultural resources.

- RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT – Agricultural research, development and technical assistance should continue to be a major federal function. Resources should be targeted to developing sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the needs of mid-size farms.
- AGRICULTURE AND TRADE – U.S. efforts should be directed toward expanding export markets for our agricultural products while minimizing negative effects on developing nations' economies. Consistent with the League's trade position, multilateral trade negotiations should be used to reduce other countries' barriers and/or subsidies protecting their agricultural products.
- AGRICULTURAL PRICES – The LWVUS supports an increasing reliance on the free market to determine the price of agricultural commodities and the production decisions of farmers, in preference to traditional price support mechanisms.
- FARM CREDIT – Farmers should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions. Federally provided farm credit is essential to maintaining the viability of farm operations when the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the credit farmers need.

Of these policies, the League believes the most essential for the future of agriculture are:

- Encouraging sustainable agriculture
- Providing research, information and technical assistance to agricultural producers
- Increasing reliance on the free market to determine prices. (1988)

Government should provide financial support for agriculture that includes disaster assistance, crop insurance, need-based loans and incentives to adopt best management practices. Support should be extended to specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables and nuts; to new production methods, such as organic, hydroponic, and urban practices; and to farms that supply local and regional markets.

Subsidized crop yield insurance should be linked to implementation of best management practices with the subsidy denied for marginal or environmentally sensitive land. The premium subsidy for crop insurance should be available for a wide range of crops, such as fruits, vegetables and specialty

crops. Government should limit the amount of the premium subsidy received by larger farms.

The League supports policies that increase competition in agricultural markets. Antitrust laws should be enforced to ensure competitive agricultural markets. Alternative marketing systems such as regional hub markets, farmers' markets and farmers' cooperatives should be promoted.

Clean air and water regulations should apply to all animal and aquaculture production and processing facilities, and not just to the very large confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Such regulations should be designed in a manner that takes into account environmentally sound technologies and the scale of the operation being regulated. Small size operations should not be granted automatic exemption from regulation.

The League believes that government regulatory agencies dealing with animal and aquaculture production should have adequate authority and funding to:

- Enforce regulations
- Gather information that supports monitoring the impacts of all animal feeding and aquaculture operations on human and animal health and the environment.

Government should fund basic research related to agriculture. Government funded research should also address the impact of new technologies on human health and the environment prior to widespread adoption of products developed with such technologies. Assessment of products developed with new technologies should be conducted as transparently as possible, while respecting intellectual property rights. Research should be funded to support the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems, such as seed banking and promoting and preserving genetic diversity.

To provide adequate safety of our food supply, government should:

- Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for foods and food additives developed using any new chemical technology, such as genetic engineering or nanotechnology
- Require developers to monitor all such new food products developed after releasing to the market
- Require developers of such new food products

- to provide data and other materials to independent third parties for pre- and post-marketing safety assessment
- Fund independent third party risk assessment examining how long term and multiple exposures to such new foods affect human health and the environment
- Withdraw marketing approval and require recall if such products are shown to be unsafe
- Require post-market monitoring of human health and environmental impacts for pharmaceutical applications used in animal and aquaculture production
- Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to the treatment of disease
- Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals
- Fund, employ and train sufficient personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies.

The League supports government developing and requiring more informative and standardized definitions on product labeling. Food labeling and advertising should display only approved health and safety claims and an accurate representation of the required ingredient and nutrition lists. The League supports consumer education about labeling of foods developed using any new technology. (2014)

MN: Support a system of sustainable agricultural production which provides safe, healthful food and which preserves and protects the state's human and natural agricultural resources and enhances the environment; research and technical assistance in farming practices and rural economies that improve the economic viability of family farms, environmental health, and the quality of life of family farmers and their communities.

Support:

- Family-owned, moderate- and small-sized farms
- Research directed to moderate- and small-sized farm operations
- Beginning farmers
- Innovative practices and crops for moderate- and small-sized farms
- Access to markets for all producers
- Providing crisis supports based on need (crisis understood to be an event beyond the farmer's control such as a natural disaster)
- Monitoring contracts for the protection of farmer
- Ensuring that corporate farms be held liable for their share of losses, environmental damage, public health hazards, etc.

- Incentives for sustainable farming practices
- Incentives for contributions to clean water and air, healthy soil and conservation of wildlife
- Incentives for the preservation of agricultural land
- Shared liability for environmental damage (caused by agriculture) between farmers and businesses under contract
- Stricter standards for animal confinement operations (based on concerns for both animals and human health as well as ethical issues relating to the treatment of animals)

In order to promote the stability of rural communities, Support:

- Community and regional planning
- Education (retraining, farm management, marketing, etc.)
- Infrastructure
- Livable wages for workers
- Crisis assistance
- Development of leadership skills
- Networking with farmers and community leaders
- Research into viable and sustainable rural communities
- Promoting exports as long as this does not hold priority over promotion of a local/regional food system
- Research into genetically modified foods is supported if the purpose of such research is to ensure the long-term safety of GMO food and crops, to advance basic research knowledge, to benefit sustainable agricultural practices and to serve the public good.

Note on terms used: "Family farm" generally implies that the family owns and lives on the land, provides most of the labor, assumes the economic risk, and makes management decisions. According to the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, sustainable agriculture seeks to balance three long-term goals: quality of life (to satisfy personal, family, and community needs for health, safety, food and happiness); environment (to enhance finite soil, water, air and other resources; economics (to be profitable). In any given situation, the most sustainable choice is the one where the net effects come closest to meeting all three goals.

SOCIAL POLICY

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

Criminal Justice

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

US:

- 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 reentry into communities of those who have been incarcerated.
- Reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law enforcement programs and policies (including scheduled, periodic audits of program and policy effectiveness)

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 of 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 that 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 health care 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 that 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. (2022)

MN: No additional position.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

US: The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Employment opportunities in modern, technological societies are closely related to education; therefore, the League supports federal programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged people. The League supports federal efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education, employment and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems.

LWWUS supports equal rights for all regardless of sex. The League supports action to bring laws into compliance with the ERA:

- To eliminate or amend those laws that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex
- To promote laws that support the goals of the ERA
- To strengthen the enforcement of such existing laws

LWWUS supports equal rights for all under state and federal law. LWWUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples. LWWUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law. The League believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved.

In more specific terms, the kinds of programs the League supports include:

- Programs in basic education, occupational education and retraining when needed at any point of an individual's working career
- Expanded opportunities in apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs
- Child-care centers for preschool children to give parents the opportunity for employment
- Greatly increased educational opportunity

through compensatory programs for disadvantaged groups beginning at the preschool level and extending through secondary education

- Federal financial aid to help needy students remain in high school and to take advantage of post-high school training and education
- A regional approach to problems of economically depressed areas that cuts across state lines. This approach can be handled administratively by such means as interstate cooperation or more formal interstate compacts or commissions made up of representatives of state and federal governments. Development programs should reflect the needs of the particular area and can include such measures as provision of education and training for available jobs, encouragement of new industry in the area, development and conservation of natural resources and the building of public facilities.
- Programs that would inform individuals of their civil rights in education, employment and housing, and of the opportunities open to them
- Full use of mediation and conciliation in efforts to bring about integration of minority groups into full participation in community life
- A federal clearinghouse for the exchange of information on solutions communities have found to problems of integration in employment, education and housing
- Programs to bring about effective integration of schools through federal technical assistance such as training programs and institutes for teachers and school administrators
- Withholding federal funds from school districts that fail to meet realistic and effective guidelines and standards for school integration
- Withholding government contracts from businesses and industries that discriminate in employment
- An effective federal fair employment practices agency

MN: Support policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support administrative enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. Support state responsibility for and responsiveness to American Indian citizens.

Support:

- The principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government (1951)
- Anti-discrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination (1957)
- The principle of fair housing and anti-discrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private (1961)
- Adequately financed enforcement of anti-discrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services (1961)
- State legislation to ensure services for American Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where American Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of American Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding American Indian lives and property are to be made by the American Indians themselves (1963)
- A state agency of American Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the American Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds (1963)
- The correction of racial imbalance in the schools (1967)
- Life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens (Convention 1983)

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

US: In evaluating federal programs that have been, or will be, established to provide equality of opportunity for education and employment, the League will support those programs that largely fulfill the following criteria:

- The nationwide effort to achieve equality of opportunity in education and employment should include participation of government at all levels and encourage the participation of private institutions.
- State and local governments should contribute to the extent their resources permit. At the same time, adequate federal funds for the establishment and continuation of programs should be available if necessary.
- Programs should be carefully tailored to the educational or employment needs of the people they are intended to reach.
- People for whom community action programs are designed should be involved in the planning and implementation of those programs.
- The programs should be carried out by personnel competent to meet the specific requirements of their jobs.
- Programs should assist people to become self-supporting, contributing members of society.
- The programs should be nondiscriminatory with provisions for enforcement.
- Research, pilot projects and continuing evaluation should be encouraged and, where feasible, built into programs.
- Programs may be closely related but should avoid unnecessary duplication.

MN: Support increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance. Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support policies to ensure equal opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons.

Support:

- Correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards (1967)
- Life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens (Convention 1983)

FAIR HOUSING

US: The following criteria should be applied to programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination:

- Opportunities for purchase or renting of homes and for borrowing money for housing should not be restricted because of discriminatory reasons such as race, color, sex, religion or national origin.
- Responsibility in the nationwide effort to achieve equality of opportunity for access to housing resides with government at all levels and with the private sector – builders, lending institutions, realtors, labor unions, business and industry, news media, civic organizations, educational institutions, churches and private citizens.
- The continued existence of patterns of discrimination depends on the covert support of community leaders, institutions and residents. Award or withdrawal of federal contracts and placement of federal installations should be used as levers to change this covert support.
- After positive steps, such as mediation and conciliation have been exhausted, the federal government should have the option for selective withholding of federal funds where patterns of discrimination in access to housing occur. In applying the option to withhold funds, the federal government should weigh the effects of its actions on the welfare of lower-income and minority groups.
- Federal programs should include provisions to guarantee equal opportunity for access to housing. Federal funds should not be used to perpetuate discrimination.
- In the enforcement of fair-housing laws, speedy resolution should be ensured. Administrative procedures and responsibilities should be clearly defined and widely publicized.
- Mediation and legal redress should be readily available.
- The process should ensure every possible protection for both complainant and persons or institutions against whom complaints are lodged. Avenues for mediation and legal redress should be widely publicized and should be easily accessible.

- Funding should be adequate to provide trained and competent staff for public education to inform citizens of the provisions of fair-housing legislation, of their fair-housing rights and of procedures to be followed in securing them. Adequate funding should also be available for mediation and for all aspects of speedy enforcement.
- There should be continued evaluation to provide a basis for revision and strengthening of all procedures so that equality of opportunity for access to housing can be accomplished.

MN: All people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low, low, and moderate income households. Specifically support programs that:

- Increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities
- Preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock
- Prevent homelessness
- Promote rental housing subsidies

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low, low and moderate incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities. Support revising the tax system to:

- Narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property
- Reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low, low and moderate income households
- Encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low, low and moderate income households

Federal Role in Public Education

FEDERAL ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

US: LWVUS believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right. The League believes that the role of the federal government should include the following:

- Provide leadership and vision to promote a quality education for all children
- Provide broad common standards developed by educational experts upon which states and local education agencies can build
- Provide a suggested curricular structure or framework as a guide to state and local education agencies to develop their own curricula
- Provide a national assessment that clearly informs teachers, parents and students about how well individual students have mastered criteria established at the national level
- Provide a national assessment that informs districts how well their populations compare to other populations similar to theirs
- Provide a combination of competitive grants and non-competitive funding to states and local school districts to achieve equity among states and populations.

LWVUS believes that an equitable, quality public education is critical for students. While the League recognizes that there are instances where the federal government's involvement is the only way to achieve universal change (desegregation, special needs population, gender equity), we also recognize that primary responsibility for public education resides with the states. In accordance with the League of Women Voters' position on Equal Rights, the League continues to support equity in public education for all through:

- Broad guidelines for accountability, leaving implementation to the state and local education agencies
- Adequate funding sources that support the broad goals of national standards
- Mechanisms for local and state funding with adequate federal support for mandates that

require less burdensome, compliance-based reporting and regulations.

LWVUS believes a basic role of the federal government in funding education should be to achieve equity among states and populations on the basis of identified needs. This should be done with full understanding that equity does not mean equal, given that some populations are more expensive to educate than others and some localities have specific needs.

The League believes that the federal government should be primarily responsible for funding any programs mandated by the federal government on local education agencies. Although the League recognizes equity in education depends on meeting basic human needs of children and of their families, the costs associated with providing equitable access to safe neighborhoods and secure housing do not belong in the education budget.

Major programs of federal funding for public education (i.e., Elementary and Secondary Education Act) should be targeted toward children living in poverty and/or children with special needs. The federal government has the responsibility to monitor and support access to the following:

- High quality teaching and learning, supported by quality current learning materials and well maintained educational facilities
- Access to health care needs (i.e., hearing, vision, dental, immunization, school-based health clinics at the secondary level, etc.) and nutritionally adequate food (i.e., school-based meals under "free and reduced meal programs").

The League believes that the first five years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Additionally, the League believes quality, developmentally appropriate and voluntary early learning experiences should be available to all children, with federally funded opportunities going first to children of poverty and/or with special needs. The League believes that the federal government should support the following:

- Early childhood education programs that include funding for parent education and

involve child development, health, nutrition and access to other supportive services, such as mental health care for all children and their families

- Research that documents quality early childhood education programs

- Research that demonstrates the importance of linking state and local community partnerships with effective early childhood education programs and services.

MN: No additional position.

State Role in Public Education

FINANCING OF EDUCATION

US: No specific position.

MN: All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

Support:

- Increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.
- The concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
 - » Provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983)
 - » The continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state (1991)
 - » State funding of the following cost differences among students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education, including gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP) (1991)
 - » State funding of the following cost differences among school districts: scarcity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation (1991)
 - » Using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding (1983)
 - » Encouraging financial efficiencies (1983)
 - » Requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies approved by the state Department of Education (1991)

- » Allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability (1983)
- » Reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments (1983)
- » The gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue (1991)
- » Maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many (1983)

Oppose:

- Continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction (1983)
- State funding of cost of living differences between districts (1991)

LIBRARY FUNDING

US: No specific position.

MN: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

Support:

- Increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions – 85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal – to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax
- Substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science [NCLIS]) in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs
- An increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), based on the

belief that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens

- An increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS)
- Distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds
- Four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them
- The sharing of resources using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services

Oppose:

- Cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING & TENURE

US: No specific position.

MN: Support improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

Support:

- Collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
 - » Require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations
 - » Require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures
 - » Allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public
- The present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- The school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should

be required by the state.

- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
 - » Require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated
 - » Retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities)
 - » Require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when making staff dismissals due to reduction of positions, including recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise
- Retaining state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

Oppose:

- Extension of the right to strike.
- Mandatory negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

CIVICS EDUCATION

US: No specific position.

MN: LWVMN believes that schools have a crucial role in preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens. Civics education should focus on knowledge and understanding of governments (e.g., local, state, national and other forms), including their structures, functions, and effects.

Effective civics education includes preparing students with the skills to participate critically and solve problems in civic life, and it provides practice for students working cooperatively in a community of citizens with rights and responsibilities.

Civics education should be integrated with history, geography, and economics instruction throughout elementary, middle, and high school instruction, and an additional course (or courses) in civics or government in high school to further prepare students for their roles as citizens.

When students graduate from high school, they should have acquired the following:

- The knowledge to influence the legislative process on issues of importance to themselves as well as others
- The motivation to be responsible citizens

- involved in providing for the general welfare of people
- The skills, inclinations, and self-confidence to participate as informed citizens in the electoral, legislative, judicial, and administrative processes of government
- The process skills to work on projects cooperatively in various size group activities

- Sufficient background knowledge of history and politics to understand the effects of voting on their own and others' lives.

Fiscal & Tax Policy

FISCAL & TAX POLICY

US: LWVUS believes federal fiscal policy should provide for:

- 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
- Responsible deficit policies
- A federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

LWVUS believes the federal tax system should:

- Be fair and equitable
- Provide adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes
- Be understandable to the taxpayer and encourage compliance
- Accomplish its objectives without creating undue administrative problems.

LWVUS believes that the federal tax system, taken as a whole, should be progressive, not proportional. The League supports income as the major tax base for federal revenues; believes that the federal income tax should be broad-based with minimal tax preferences and a progressive rate structure; opposes a value-added tax or a national sales tax in the federal revenue system.

MN: Support a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

Support:

- A balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees
- The following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
 - » Competitiveness: Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness
 - » Efficiency: Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated
 - » Equity: Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances
 - » Progressivity: Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes
 - » Reliability: Provides a stable source of revenue
 - » Responsiveness: Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth
 - » Simplicity: Is understandable to the taxpayer
- A progressive individual income tax with a graduated rate schedule
- A broad-based retail sales tax with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons
- The use of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education (see the Financing Education position.)
- A corporation franchise tax which is competitive with other states providing a comparable

level of public services. LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state

- The use of other sources of revenue, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system
- Achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
 - » Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system
 - » Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving intended purpose
 - » Reviewed periodically to justify continuance
- The distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
 - » It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
 - » If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
 - » The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
 - » Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance the equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.
 - » Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.
 - » The principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources
 - » Long-term financial management of all state government funds
 - » Consideration of long-term projections of revenue and expenditures when making budget decisions
 - » An adequate budget reserve, established during good economic times, to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

US: No specific position.

MN: The LWVMN position has four parts:

I. Broad Goals

LWVMN believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. LWVMN strongly supports the following broad goals (by priority).

Support:

- Provide high-quality Pre-K-12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans.
- Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans.
- Protect the state's natural environment.
- Encourage economic self-sufficiency.
- Provide for the public safety.
- Provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Minnesotans.
- Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).
- Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit.
- Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth.
- Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit.
- Create a business climate that will allow MN business to compete nationally and internationally.
- Ensure timely resolution of court cases.

Oppose:

The goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

II. Spending Priorities

LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are Pre-K-12 (regular) education, health care, and environmental protection. When considering specific proposals requiring choices, LWVMN believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others:

- Regular education over vocational education
- Vocational education over special education
- Special education over community education and recreation
- Health care and family support over nursing home care
- Environmental protection over parks and recreation
- Roads and transit over highway patrol

- Job-related economic security over business incentives
- Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)
- HACA over Local Government Aid
- The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions.

III. Criteria for Limiting Spending

When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria (by priority).

Support:

- State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed.
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure.
- Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes.
- Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens.
- Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility.

Oppose:

- Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds
- Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services

- Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition
- Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children

IV. Efficiency

LWVMN supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services.

Support:

- Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems
- Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation
- Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance
- Giving government employees more flexibility and incentives to manage the way they do their jobs
- Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results
- Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results
- Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency

Oppose:

- Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education

Health Care

BASIC LEVEL OF QUALITY CARE

US: LWVUS believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes:

- The prevention of disease
- Health promotion and education
- Primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health)

- Acute care
- Long-term care
- Mental health care

Every U.S. resident should have access to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive service that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care. Dental, vision and hearing care also are important but lower in priority. The League believes that under any system of health care reform, consumers/patients should be permitted to purchase services or insurance coverage beyond the basic level.

MN: No additional position.

FINANCING & ADMINISTRATION

US: The League favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums. As the United States moves toward a national health insurance plan, an employer-based system of health care reform that provides universal access is acceptable to the League. The League supports administration of the U.S. health care system either by a combination of the private and public sectors or by a combination of federal, state and/or regional government agencies.

The League is opposed to a strictly private market-based model of financing the health care system. The League also is opposed to the administration of the health care system solely by the private sector or the states.

MN: No additional position.

TAXES

US: LWVUS supports increased taxes to finance a basic level of health care for all U.S. residents, provided health care reforms contain effective cost control strategies.

MN: No additional position.

COST CONTROL

US: The League believes that efficient and economical delivery of care can be enhanced by such cost control methods as:

- The reduction of administrative costs
- Regional planning for the allocation of personnel, facilities and equipment
- The establishment of maximum levels of public reimbursement to providers
- Malpractice reform
- The use of managed care
- Utilization review of treatment
- Mandatory second opinions before surgery or extensive treatment
- Consumer accountability through deductibles and co-payments

MN: No additional position.

EQUITY ISSUES

US: The League believes that health care services could be more equitably distributed by:

- Allocating medical resources to under-served areas
- Providing for training health care professionals in needed fields of care
- Standardizing basic levels of service for publicly funded health care programs
- Requiring insurance plans to use community rating instead of experience rating
- Establishing insurance pools for small businesses and organizations

The League believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources. Limited resources should be allocated based on the following criteria considered together:

- The urgency of the medical condition
- The life expectancy of the patient
- The expected outcome of the treatment
- The cost of the procedure
- The duration of care
- The wishes of the patient and the family

MN: No additional position.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

US: LWVUS supports:

- Behavioral Health as the nationally accepted term that includes both mental illness and substance use disorder
- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services
- Behavioral Health care that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care
- Early and affordable behavioral health diagnosis and treatment for children and youth from early childhood through adolescence
- Early and appropriate diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents that is family-focused and community-based
- Access to safe and stable housing for people with behavioral health challenges, including those who are chronically homeless
- Effective re-entry planning and follow-up for people released from both behavioral health

- hospitalization and the criminal justice system
- Problem solving or specialty courts, including mental health and drug courts, in all judicial districts to provide needed treatment and avoid inappropriate entry into the criminal justice system
- Health education from early childhood throughout life that integrates all aspects of social, emotional and physical health and wellness
- Efforts to decrease the stigmatization of, and normalize, behavioral health problems and care

MN: Support a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as “persons with mental illness”). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/ or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

Support:

- Adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client’s needs, yet accountable to the public
- A range of appropriate housing options for

- persons with mental illness
- A commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs
- A coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response
- Continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers

END OF LIFE OPTIONS

US: No specific position.

MN: Support laws ensuring end of life options. (2022)

Support:

- Legislation that grants the option for a terminally-ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one’s life
- Legislation that includes safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel

Immigration

IMMIGRATION

US: LWVUS believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the United States on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law. The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the United States.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations. In transition to

a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

MN: LWVMN supports incorporating immigrants into our communities by providing access to education, by endorsing the development of secure identification documents, and by respecting the right of law enforcement personnel to perform their duties without the burden of interpreting federal immigration policies.

Support:

- Federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

- Federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations
- Provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status as a transitional step
- Federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations
- State funding of Adult Basic Education for each program site adequate to meet the needs of the eligible residents
- In-state tuition at state colleges and universities under the same conditions for all Minnesota residents
- Recognition by the Department of Public Safety of the matricula consular as an acceptable document to prove identity for obtaining a driver's license.

Oppose:

- Requiring law enforcement employees of state, county, or local government agencies to be deputized by INS to enforce immigration laws
- Allowing residents with legal immigrant status to run for local offices (Adopted by LWVMN Board, March, 2003)

CRITERIA FOR LEGAL ADMISSION

US: The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries
- Economic, business and employment needs in the United States
- Education and training needs of the United States

- Educational program opportunities
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity

MN: No additional position.

ADMINISTRATION & ENFORCEMENT

US: The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment. The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States
- Increased personnel at borders
- Programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the United States to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs

MN: No additional position.

UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS ALREADY IN THE U.S.

US: In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

MN: No additional position.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

PREVENTING AND REDUCING POVERTY

US: 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.

Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care.

The federal government should set minimum,

uniform standards and guidelines for social welfare programs and should bear primary responsibility for financing programs designed to help meet the basic needs of individuals and families. State and local governments, as well as the private sector, should have a secondary role in financing food, housing and health care programs. Income assistance programs should be financed primarily by the federal government with state governments assuming secondary responsibility.

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 child care 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

MN: No additional position.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

US: The League believes 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
- Nutrition programs

MN: No additional position.

ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

US: The League believes that energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems should afford better access to housing and jobs and the League will continue to examine transportation policies in light of these goals.

MN: No additional position.

CRITERIA FOR INCOME ASSISTANCE

US:

- Eligibility of all low-income individuals for

assistance should be based on need. Eligibility should be established through simplified procedures such as a declaration of need, spot-checked in a manner similar to that used in checking the validity of income tax returns.

- Benefit levels should be sufficient to provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter. Minimum income standards should be adjusted for regional differences in the cost of living and should be revised periodically to take into account changes in the purchasing value of the dollar. Until a federal welfare program achieves an adequate level of benefits, some states will need to supplement federal payments.
- There should be increasing emphasis on cash assistance, but in-kind assistance (e.g., food stamps, housing subsidies, medical aid) should be continued to help assure that these needs are met.
- Under a revised program participants should not have their benefits reduced.
- Privacy of participants should be protected. All administrative procedures should be conducted with respect for the rights and dignity of the individuals.
- Work should be encouraged. Participants' total income should increase as earnings increase. Counseling, realistic training for actual jobs and financial incentives should be the links between job programs and income assistance.

MN: No additional position.

CRITERIA FOR SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

US:

- Supportive services should be available but not compulsory for participants in income assistance programs. Most important among these are child care, counseling, transportation, and family planning, health care and legal services.
- Fees for supportive services should be based on ability to pay and be free where necessary.
- Facilities and services for participants should be the same as for the general public.
- The federal government should exert leadership in setting standards for eligibility, for the quality of services and for adequate funding.
- Participants in the programs should be included in program development and implementation, and the administration of social services programs should be responsive to the needs of the people being served.
- Wherever possible, these services should be conveniently located in the neighborhood.

- Transportation systems should afford better access to housing and jobs and should also provide energy efficient and environmentally sound transportation.
- Government programs that require recipients of assistance to engage in work-related programs would be acceptable only if the following protections are guaranteed to the participants:
 - » Job training
 - » Basic education
 - » Exemptions for primary care givers
 - » Supplemental support services such as child care and transportation
 - » Equitable compensation to ensure that program participants earn the same wages and benefits as other employees performing similar work
 - » A disregard of some earned income for purposes of calculating benefit levels.

MN: No additional position.

CRITERIA FOR HOUSING SUPPLY

US: The following considerations can be applied to programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family:

- The responsibility for achieving national housing goals rests primarily with the federal government, which should:
 - » Assure that our economic system is functioning to produce and maintain sufficient decent housing for citizens at all income levels
 - » Compensate for any failure or inadequacy of the system by building, financing, renting and selling homes to those citizens whose housing needs are not being met
 - » Give a variety of incentives to local jurisdictions to encourage them to provide within their boundaries an adequate supply of decent housing for low- and moderate-income groups
 - » Withhold federal funds from communities that fail to encourage such housing.
- State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.
- Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.
- When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.
- Government programs providing subsidies to the building, financing and insuring industries for housing for lower-income families should be evaluated in terms of units produced rather than in terms of benefits accruing to these industries.
- Government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment.
- Regional and metropolitan planning should be promoted to prevent haphazard urban growth, and housing for low- and moderate-income families should be provided as a part of all planned neighborhoods or communities.
- Lower-income families should not be segregated in large developments or neighborhoods. As their economic status improves, lower-income families should be enabled to continue to live in the same units as private tenants or as homeowners, if they are so inclined.
- Housing should be designed to meet human needs and should be built with amenities that will encourage economic integration within apartment buildings as well as within neighborhoods.
- Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provision for quality public services and facilities, including schools, transportation, recreation, etc., that will encourage integration and stability.
- Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.
- State and local governments should adopt and enforce:
 - » Uniform building codes with standards based on performance
 - » Housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens.
- State and local tax structures should be examined and revised to:
 - » Benefit communities that build housing for lower-income families
 - » Encourage private owners to improve their homes
 - » Reduce speculative land costs
- Government, industry and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.
- Rights of tenants to negotiate for proper

- maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.
- Housing programs should be administered by individuals trained for the jobs and sympathetic with the needs of their clientele.
- Citizen groups should participate in the development of publicly assisted housing programs by:

- » Evaluating performance
- » Activating nonprofit sponsorships
- » Supporting legislation
- » Developing public awareness of housing discrimination and need.

MN: No additional position.

Child Care

CHILD CARE

US: LWVUS supports programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

MN: Support coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)

Support:

- Adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children
- Public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand
- Policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers
- Providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK

US: LWVUS believes that early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include:

- Child abuse/neglect prevention
- Teen pregnancy prevention
- Quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care
- Early childhood education
- Developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3
- Family support services
- Violence prevention

MN: No additional position.

CHILD HEALTH

US: No specific position.

MN: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

Support:

- Public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children
- Publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level
- Publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children
- Ensuring adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness

TEENAGE PREGNANCY

US: No specific position.

MN: Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

Support:

- The Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting
- Increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy
- A prevention curriculum that includes contraception education, and the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents
- Health care providers publicizing the necessity

of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services

CHILD SUPPORT

US: No specific position.

MN: Support stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

Support:

- Efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families
- Efforts to adequately publicize available services
- Providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner (1982)

Alcohol, Tobacco & Cannabis Use

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO & CANNABIS USE

US: No specific position.

MN: LWVMN supports educational programs that advance improved chemical health.

Support:

- Ongoing programs, starting in the elementary school and continuing in the middle and high school
- Regular, continuing education for adult educators, coaches and school administrators

- Alternatives to suspension for alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis violations in the schools
- Allocation of public funds for state and community initiatives to prevent illegal alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis use
- Consistent city and school guidelines for adults who chaperone youth activities
- State laws, city ordinances and law enforcement efforts designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use (Convention 1999, Cannabis added 2024)

Violence Prevention

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

US: LWVUS supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support:

- Public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence
- The active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior
- The allocation of public monies

MN: Support violence prevention programs in our

community. (1994)

Support:

- Educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This includes support for:
 - » Government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes
 - » Local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in

school curricula

- » Use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
- » Training for child care providers
- A requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training
- The use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality
- Efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence
- Allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior
- The following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations
- Efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence
- Efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography

FAMILY VIOLENCE

US: No specific position.

MN: Support improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support improved services for the victims.

Support:

- A multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse
- More advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence
- More shelters for battered women
- A complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services
- A continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes
- Provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence
- A coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence (1980)

CHILD PROTECTION

US: No specific position.

MN: Support adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

Support:

- The assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect
- A Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children
- Funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect
- Modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser

Firearms

FIREARMS

US: LWVUS believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens.

The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety. The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on “Saturday night specials,” enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor dealers.

MN: Supports restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms in the state of Minnesota. The LWVMN definition of firearms includes all manufactured handguns, long guns and assault weapons, and ghost guns (privately-made firearms that are untraceable, such as those made from unfinished frames/receivers or 3D printers – i.e. those without serial numbers).

Supports laws intended to reduce deaths and injuries by firearms and support funding programs and strategies that will reduce homicides, suicides or unintentional firearm deaths or injuries.

Support:

- Universal background checks for the purchase, transfer and acquisition of all firearms including those self-produced or acquired by licensed

dealers, unlicensed sellers, and online or private sales.

- Gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner’s negligence
- Allowing local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law
- Enacting Extreme Risk Protection Order laws (Red Flag laws) to temporarily restrict access to guns for individuals who are a danger to themselves or others
- Funding community-based violence intervention (CVI) programs and strategies
- Restricting the presence of firearms from the state capitol building
- Enacting stronger safe firearms storage laws
- State licensing of firearm dealers
- Funding firearm violence research

Oppose:

- An amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.
- Passage of Stand-Your-Ground-laws

Urban Policy

URBAN POLICY

US: LWVUS believes that it is in the national interest to promote the well-being of America’s cities. Sharply targeted federal assistance to distressed cities should be central to this policy. The federal government should give highest priority in urban policy to measures that enhance the economic base of cities. The League also favors supplementary federal aid for cities in distressed fiscal condition and grants for particular program areas as strategies to counter the problems of hardship cities.

The fiscal health of cities depends on the active cooperation of all levels of government. The federal government should provide incentives to encourage states to take an active role in promoting the fiscal viability of their cities.

The League is committed to an urban environment beneficial to life and to resource management in the public interest.

MN: No additional position.

GENERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

US: The League supports a variety of federal strategies, including direct general assistance, targeted to distressed cities. Such a program should include aid to counter recession.

In providing federal aid for particular program areas, grants offer city governments the best opportunities to meet local needs. In order to increase the availability of funds to city governments for capital expenditures, the federal government should use mechanisms to lower the cost of borrowing.

Aid to cities should include technical assistance to improve management capacity.

MN: No additional position.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

US: The cornerstone of a national urban policy is a commitment to helping cities achieve economic strength. Federal programs to encourage private reinvestment in central cities should counter an eroding tax base and provide jobs for the inner-city unemployed. Therefore, the League supports the

following federal strategies:

- Target community development programs to cities most in need
- Encourage businesses to locate or expand in distressed cities through such financial incentives as investment tax credits, loan guarantees, subsidies for hiring the long-term unemployed and interest subsidies

- Expand middle-income housing while not diminishing attention to low-income housing needs
- Target federal purchasing and location of federal facilities in distressed cities

MN: No additional position.

Death Penalty

DEATH PENALTY

US: LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.

MN: Support the abolition of the death penalty and oppose its reinstatement in Minnesota.

Sentencing Policy

SENTENCING POLICY

US: LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

MN: Support sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

Support:

- A presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff
- Consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances
- The use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities
- Sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender
- Sentencing taking into consideration:
 - » the need for drug counseling whether the offender has a marketable skill
 - » academic training of the offender
 - » need for psychiatric treatment
 - » restitution when appropriate

- » the availability of a residence and/or employment
- » resolution of the causative situation

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, time off for good behavior, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

ADULT CORRECTIONS

US: No specific position.

MN: Support a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society.

Support:

- Correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- Provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- Treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.

- Recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- Ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- Education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- Up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

JUVENILE CORRECTIONS

US: No specific position.

MN: Support a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society.

Support:

- A program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- Continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- The availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- Maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- Diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.
- The consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- Constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

JUDICIAL SYSTEM

US: No specific position.

MN: Support a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

Support:

- Administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.
- Methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- Procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- The development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

Human Trafficking

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

US: LWVUS opposes all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking. We consider human trafficking to be a form of modern day slavery and believe that every measure should be taken and every effort should be made through legislation and changes in public policy to prevent human trafficking.

Prosecution and penalization of traffickers and abusers should be established, and existing laws should be strictly enforced. Extensive essential services for victims should be applied where needed. Education and awareness programs on human trafficking should be established in our communities and in our schools.

MN: No additional position.

COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES (CMAL)

The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an inter-league organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.

Summary of Positions

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate through appointment of its members, including the chair, by the governor.

Support provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. Support retention of a gubernatorial-appointed Metropolitan Council with use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993, 2001, 2019)

Details:

- The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain positions for the good of the entire area. The most important qualifications for appointees are knowledge of regional issues, having a regional perspective, demographic diversity, and the ability to effectively meet the time requirements for service as Metropolitan Council member.
- The appointed council is responsible to the governor and the residents of the metropolitan area as a whole.
- CMAL supports an open appointment process including publicized vacancies, a nominating committee that recommends to the governor a slate of potential appointees, with citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments.
- CMAL supports fixed staggered terms for Metropolitan Council members, removal only for cause, and districts of equal population.
- CMAL does not support the appointment of local elected officials to, or direct election of, members to the Metropolitan Council.

HOUSING

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

HEALTH

CMAL: Support the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

FUNDING/FINANCING FISCAL DISPARITIES

CMAL: Support area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move toward the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970)

The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997)

Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

CMAL: Support operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

CMAL supports:

- Improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
 - » Uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council
 - » A responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies
- Improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
 - » Establishing a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs
 - » Regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing
 - » Regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials
 - » Responsible administrative procedures

SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

CMAL: Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

CMAL: Support local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action." (1989)

CMAL supports:

- Providing a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service)
- Local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging
- Providing additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary
- Flexibility in the provision of these services – providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these

LAND USE & ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CMAL: CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will:

1. preserve and enhance the natural environment;
2. use public investment to the best advantage; and
3. provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see *LWVMN and LWVUS positions*.)

CMAL supports:

- Channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern
- Preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities
- Using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life
- Authorization of the Metropolitan Council to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them

ENVIRONMENT

CMAL: Support a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

CMAL supports:

- Water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply

availability through approval of amendments to land use plans

- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

TRANSPORTATION

CMAL: Support the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency planning and coordinating a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and having approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (*Also see LWVUS position in Impact on Issues.*)

CMAL supports:

- Various modes of transportation, both public and private, including ride-sharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system
- Transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking and feeder services, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CMAL: Support measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. (1975, 2022)

CMAL believes that accountability and visibility of a governmental body, such as a county, are obtained by:

- Effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of the jurisdiction;
- Public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including an opportunity for the to give timely and meaningful input;
- Offering members of the public opportunities to

provide timely and meaningful input into policy development, county initiatives and capital projects, including, by way of example, one-on-one meetings with county commissioners, virtual and in-person town meetings, and open houses;

- Provision of ample and easily accessible notice of the location, time, date and agenda for county board meetings, county board committee meetings, county board work sessions and county advisory committee/commission meetings;
- Posting on its website minutes or discussion notes from county board meetings, county board committee meetings, county board work sessions, and county board advisory committee/commission meetings;
- Posting on its website video recordings of county board meetings and county board committee meetings;
- Dissemination of information on the procedures for appointment to advisory committees/commissions, as well as posting the the number of members for each committee/commission and the identity of current appointees;
- Ensuring public access to county board meetings, county board committee meetings, county board work sessions and county advisory committee/commission meetings, plus the opportunity for members of the public to make public comment at county board meetings and county board committee meetings;
- Regular communication between county government and municipalities and between county government and other levels of government.

CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of residents to become adequately informed.

CMAL views the Metropolitan Council as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementers and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

CMAL supports measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government in the metropolitan area. CMAL believes that county government should post general information on its website about funds received from or through the Metropolitan Council and how such funds are used.