

PROGRAM 2025-2026
League of Women Voters Montana
April 2025 - March 2026

Approve Existing Positions: Every year, each League takes formal action to approve the positions it has adopted over the years. Over the past year, the Education Working Group prepared study materials and proposed an update to the League's Education position, which is focused primarily on how education is funded. Local Leagues participated in the study and consensus discussions of the proposed changes. The results of the consensus process is the following position that incorporates the changes approved by the 2025 Convention delegates

LWV Montana position on EDUCATION

To promote efficient, equitable, and accountable financing of public education, with the state funding its share of the cost.

Position In Brief:

To promote efficient and equitable financing of public education, with the state funding its share of the cost, and to provide a high-quality public education, beginning in early childhood, which produces graduates with skills in critical thinking, reading, writing and mathematics and an understanding of democracy and how governments function.

The League of Women Voters of Montana supports:

1. *A structure of public education for preschool through high school publicly governed and funded.*
2. *That structure should provide:*
 - a. *That the state fully funds a high-quality public education for all as measured by state standards;*
 - b. *That the state fully funds state-mandated services;*
 - c. *That equity of funding and equity of taxpayer effort be primary goals.*
3. *Preschool education for all children in the state of Montana.*

LWV MT opposes the diversion of public funds directly or indirectly to private educational programs. Examples include but are not limited to tax credits, vouchers and education savings accounts.

Read the LWV Montana positions: <https://my.lwv.org/montana/positions>

Recommit to Foundational Values: Nonpartisanship and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We neither support nor oppose candidates and political parties. We encourage outreach to and support of diverse groups with emphasis on Native Americans, young people, immigrants, residents of rural areas, those with disabilities and other diverse

groups. We use a land acknowledgement statement at the beginning of every League meeting. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission and achievements as well.

Level One Priority: Leadership in Making Democracy Work

Support for National action: Individual members contact their members of Congress and the President to follow through on Actions taken by National. State officers forward National League President updates and calls to action from LWVUS to local leaders and members as needed. Also, ongoing campaigns such as the ERA and national voting rights legislation.

Eliminate the Electoral College Campaign in providing public education, and in working with young people and civics education. Collaborate with Leagues across the country – Deerfield, Illinois.

Support for Montana Constitution: public education and defense of the framework for democracy contained in the Montana Constitution. Work in collaboration with Friends of the Montana Constitution and other organizations to engage Montanans in learning more about their constitution and appreciating the rights and responsibilities we share. Engage in advocacy work and lawsuits as necessary. Support the balance of power between the three branches of government and foundational institutions.

Voting Rights and Voter Protection in 2025 Legislative Session and Interim

Committees: Support positive reforms such as online voter registration for all, portable voter registration within each state, and reforms to provisional voting, and to oppose any bills that curtail voting rights. Defend existing voter rights if needed during the 2025 session. Monitor and participate in Interim Committees related to voting and elections. Participate in lawsuits as necessary to defend state Constitution. Continue cooperation with Pro-Democracy Working Group.

Money in Politics 2025 Legislative Session: Lobby in legislature according to League positions on bills affecting the Commissioner of Political Practices and other money in politics bills. Support federal legislation.

Voter Registration: Coordinate with local Leagues to expand voter education and registration efforts, with a special focus on voters who are between the ages of 18 to 29, voters who have been formerly incarcerated, voters who are part of any minority demographic groups in Montana, and new citizens. Collaboration with other organizations and Clerks and Records, Election Officials.

Voter Education: Inform people about existing on-line voting resources as part of our election voter registration and voter outreach, such as the Montana Secretary of State website, VOTE411/Voter Resource webpage and FollowtheMoney.org, as well as the data site on campaign finance from the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices. Provide public education on what has changed since the 2023 Legislature. Work in coalition to counter misinformation about Montana's election system and safety of voting. Fundraise and collaborate to secure state-wide VOTE411 for 2024 election season. Also develop news literacy materials (mis and dis information).

Youth Voter Engagement and Civics Education: develop and implement civics education materials and engagement program for high school, college-age, and adults who have missed civics education. Potential to work with Voter Girl program and Suffrage Timeline, Nitty Gritty of Voting presentation with mock elections. Collaborate with other organizations. Develop Youth Advisory Board.

Protecting Reproductive Freedom in Montana: Protect the right to privacy under the Montana Constitution to protect reproductive freedom in Montana, and the amendment to the Constitution that passed in November of 2024.

Nurture Ourselves for the Long Haul: incorporate nurturing practices into League meetings and relationships, the importance of meeting face-to-face, having times for food and fun, while holding strong the values of the League.

Level Two Priority: Work in Collaboration with Other Groups

Climate Change: provide public education in collaboration with other organizations on climate change, what can be done.

Level Three Priority: Be an Ally to Other Groups

ERA: Public education and support for woman's rights (ERA) and a woman's right to choose.

Affordable Housing: Continue membership in the statewide Housing Coalition and support their efforts where possible.

Education: Education Working Group continues to monitor education funding issues through communications with existing non-profit education organizations, with support for actions where needed.

POTENTIAL STUDIES FOR 2025-2026:

Library Study (Book Banning, ensuring State Funding)