



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE**

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**Position Paper on why Delaware needs  
a Joint House and Senate  
Grants-in-Aid Committee  
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**The League of Women Voters of Delaware, Inc. supports the creation of a Joint General Assembly Committee to approve Grant -in -Aid requests and review their performance.**

A Joint Committee on Grants-in-Aid would:

- Create a legislative committee exclusively responsible for the oversight of grants-in aid and ensure that recipients' operations are consistent with their mission, are in the best interest of the state and are cost effective.
- Provide a thorough view of applications and performance standards.
- Review whether the recipient is the best suited for state funds; and
- Increase review of recipients' on-site conduct and performance.

**What are Grants-in Aid?**

Grants-in- Aids are appropriations made by the General Assembly as part of the budget process to support the activities of non-profit organizations that provide services to the citizens of Delaware. This funding is intended to provide supplemental money to service agencies as part of their overall funds. The funds provide support for senior centers, fire companies and veterans' groups. Approximately half the total appropriated is allocated to social service and cultural organizations.

**How does it Work?**

Entities requesting funds submit a detailed application and financial data requesting a grant.<sup>1</sup> The Joint Committee on Finance makes the final recommendation to the House and Senate for enactment of a bill. The General Assembly typically adopts the Grant-in-Aid bill in the last week of June. Grantees are subject to performance audits by the Controller General's office.

**How Much was appropriated for the current fiscal year?**

In the FY 2021 Budget, the Governor requested \$55 million in Grant-in-Aid funding.

**Proposed Reforms.**

In the 149<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2017-2018), House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst and House Minority Whip Deborah Hudson introduced House Bill (HB) 260 to create a bipartisan, bicameral, six-member committee like the Joint Finance and Joint Sunset Committees. The bill had several co-sponsors, including the House Speaker. The bill would have allowed a thorough review of applications, institution of performance measures and onsite visits of recipients. HB 260 passed the House on January 11, 2018, by a vote of 41-0. The bill was assigned to the Senate Finance Committee<sup>2</sup>. It died without Senate consideration when the General Assembly adjourned in June 2018.

In the 150<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2019-2020), HB 162 was introduced which would again create a joint Grants-in Aid Committee (one of the Co-Sponsors was Sen. Sokola, D-8). On June 19, 2019, the bill was reported out of the House Committee on Administration. It died with the adjournment of the session.

In the current 151<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, HB 93 has been introduced by Rep. Briggs King. It has a wide range of republican supports and at least two democratic sponsors (Reps. Dorsey Walker, D-3 and Wilson-Anton, D-26). Like its predecessors, it would create a joint Committee to review requests for grants-in-aid and to develop the grants-in-aids appropriation bill.

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<sup>1</sup> See State of Delaware Grant in Aid Fiscal Year 2021 General Online Application Guide. Completing the application for a grant-in aid requires several substantive steps including information on governance issues, positions and salary information, disbursements, program information, financial summaries and audits of the organization.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly House Bill 260, 149<sup>th</sup> sess. (2017-2018) ("An Act to Amend Title 29 of the Delaware Code Relating to Grant-in-Aid")