

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE
PROPOSED PROGRAM
2021-2023**

The Advocacy Corps recommends adoption of the current Program and Continuing Studies with the changes as marked (~~Deletions struck through~~; added language in **red font**; rationale/explanation *in italics*.)

STATE GOVERNMENT

Delaware General Assembly - Support of measures to promote a more effective and responsive legislative branch of state government, including strengthening the committee system and use of the budgetary process to review and evaluate state programs.

Ethics - Support of ethics legislation in the areas of campaign finance, conflict of interest, financial disclosure and lobbying disclosure.

Delaware State Constitution - Support of a Constitution for the State of Delaware which would be confined to broad principles and would promote more efficient and responsive government.

Public/Private Partnerships - Support the use of public/private partnerships by governments in Delaware if a project can be better undertaken with public/private cooperation. Public input, careful controls and adequate safeguards need to be part of these partnerships.

Reapportionment/Redistricting - Support for an open unbiased process for ~~reapportionment and~~ redistricting with opportunities for public participation.

*Delete reference to **Reapportionment**, which refers to the President's reapportionment of Congressional seats among the states, based on changes in state population. No state action is involved.*

Representative Government:

VOTING RIGHTS

Citizen's Right to Vote

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

Add the LWVUS position, given the importance of voting rights

Alternative Election Methodologies ~~– New~~ **Continuing study item** : LWVDE take up a broad overview study of alternative election methodologies, with a goal of selecting for further study any of those methodologies that appear to have promise to improve the democratic process in Delaware. Such alternative election methodologies include Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV; also known as Instant Runoff Voting, or IRV), approval voting, and proportional voting (multi-representative districts). (Adopted convention 2019)

This study has been completed and new full position is posted at the end of this listing.

SOCIAL POLICY

Justice System - Continuing Study: A re-evaluation of Delaware's criminal justice system and the impact of the current policies and practices on society. (Action will continue to be taken under LWVDE current position. (Adopted at convention June 2017) The study is worded intentionally broad so that the study committee can start where it sees the most effective effort and timeliness.)

Support for the adoption of consistent policies which, within budgetary constraints, will permit the disposition of

offenders in the best interests of society, the victim(s), and the offenders and their families.

We oppose mandatory sentencing.

We support the expansion of drug courts and mental health courts for all nonviolent offenders and the appropriate science based health and mental health treatment of all offenders.

Family Court, Related State Programs for Children, Domestic Violence - Support of uniformity in operation of the Family Court system; automatic expungement of certain juvenile records; state provided diagnostic services, care, education and treatment to age 21 for youths and young adults who have mental or physical illness or who are developmentally delayed or are substance abusers or abused/neglected; strong educational programs on the rights of victims of family violence.

Before and After School Child Care - Support for state government involvement in encouraging, establishing and/or supporting child care programs.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Support of equal access to quality public education for all students to reach their individual, fullest, potential as contributing citizens of our state, nation and world.

~~**Financing Public Education**—Support for methods of financing public education that will promote equal opportunity for quality education and improve both the local districts' and state's budgeting while maintaining a level of local control.~~

Support of methods of financing quality public education which are equitable, flexible, transparent, measurable, and effective.

Rationale for program revisions:

The practice of delivering a quality education to Delaware K-12 students is in rapid transition. Changing pupil demographics and needs, evolving understanding and application of best practices, developments in public concern for the most vulnerable of Delaware's youth, and the role of health in schools and the community, compel the League to stand anew for education, equity, and opportunities for today's youth to reach their potential as contributing citizens of our state, nation and world.

Education - Continuing Study: A study of the public education system in Delaware with special focus on financing, charter schools, and transparency and accountability to citizens. (*Adopted at convention June 2017*)

Gun Control - Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semiautomatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety. (LWVUS position applies)

Health Care: Continuing Study: A study of the financing and delivery of health care in Delaware. (*Adopted revision at convention June 2019*)

LWVDE also acts under the LWVUS health care position: "Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs."

End of Life Options

Support for state laws that grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one's life and that such legislation should include safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel. (Position adopted at April, 2019 state board meeting after concurrence with LWV Utah position.)

Needle Exchange Programs - Support for comprehensive needle exchange programs, which also offer education and referrals to appropriate services, as part of a public health effort to reduce the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.

Public School Libraries - Support policies and funding for public school library media centers that promote their central role in providing equal opportunity for all children to achieve educational excellence.

ENERGY/CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

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

Add the LWVUS position, given the importance of climate change.

Renewable Energy Portfolio – Support for an increase in the percentage of renewable energy sources in Delaware’s Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) provided that they: have minimum environmental impact; use the best current technology as measured by reliability, proven effectiveness, and being state-of-the-art; have long range cost effectiveness including all net costs such as health and environmental costs, state and federal subsidies, and price stability. Support of measures ensuring that total electricity sales in Delaware be required to meet the RPS.

Support aggressive increases, by increments, of the percentage goals of renewable energy resources of electricity sold in Delaware beyond the goal of 25% renewable energy resources by 2025, with increased goals for 2035 and 2050. *(Updated 6/2017)*

Transmission and Distribution – Support for maximizing the development and delivery of renewable energy to Delaware when designing and developing new transmission plans for the region. In addition to delivering reliable, adequate electric service to Delaware, the key factors to be considered in making a decision on any transmission plan/transmission enhancements are: Degree of environmental impact; Degree of utilization of the transmission for renewable resource power vs. fossil- fuel generated power; True cost, including all cost- externalities; Safety and security of the grid.

Energy/Climate Change – Support for an aggressive and comprehensive energy use/climate change plan for Delaware. Some key points that should be included:

Accelerate bringing new green businesses, jobs and industries to Delaware, and investigate emerging energy technologies. Set targets and a timetable for reducing Delaware’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Plan for extensive adaptation measures at all levels of government for climate change impacts that cannot be avoided---especially sea level rise.

Support increasing the currently recommended 2030 goal for reducing Delaware’s emissions of all greenhouse gases from 30% to a larger percentage, e.g., 40-45%, relative to 2008. A longer-term goal should be set and be significantly higher, e.g. 80% by 2050, relative to 2008. *(Updated 6/2017)*

Support public education and outreach; expand renewable energy and climate change in Delaware curriculum standards. As Delaware calculates energy costs, full life cycle analyses* with all externalities** must be included. Social and economic justice must be considered in implementing energy and climate change policy.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) involves pricing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from electricity generation in Delaware and eight other Mid-Atlantic and Northeastern states. It uses a system of cap and

trade, and now has a decreasing emissions cap of 2.5% per year. The League supports decreasing the RGGI cap by 5% per year, starting 2021 through 2030. *(Updated 6/2017)*

The Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI) is similar to RGGI in that it is a regional effort to reduce carbon emissions from the transportation sector. The League supports Delaware having an increasing price on carbon emissions from transportation fuels - especially on a regional basis - provided that some of that revenue is used to ease the burden on low-income families, such as offering gas stamps, or returning part or all of the revenue as a rebate to adult residents on a per capita basis; to promote walkable/bikeable communities; to be used for refurbishing transportation infrastructure; to stimulate research and innovation; to encourage vehicle energy efficiency; to provide additional electrical charging stations for hybrid and all-electric vehicles; to develop economic opportunities and create jobs. *(Updated 6/2017)*

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support of policies that protect air and water quality, and reduce solid waste.

COASTAL ZONE - Support for Coastal Zone planning which considers the best possible outcome for people, the land, and the coastal environment.

LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION - Support of the regulation of growth and optimum use of land through comprehensive planning policy. Monitoring of land use policies and procedures and their relationship to human needs, population trends, transportation planning, and ecological and socioeconomic factors. Encouragement of continuing cooperation among governmental agencies.

Support of a balanced, intermodal transportation system interconnected with land use and based on interagency and inter-jurisdictional coordination.

Support reducing transportation-generated greenhouse gas emissions by wiser land use planning and by enhancing public transit options.

Some key points that should be included:

Direct development towards growth zones, except for environmentally sensitive areas within those growth zones; assure availability of infrastructure, services and walkability before developing. - Build compact, or dense, development within established development areas in which pedestrians can safely and conveniently access services; reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). - Modify Delaware's paratransit fee schedule to establish separate classifications for ADA* and non-ADA** service. - Reform the system to establish fairer pricing for non-ADA paratransit use. - Tighten eligibility requirements for all paratransit use in situations where the state has discretion. Establish a dedicated funding stream for public transit; explore a variety of funding sources.

CRITICAL LAND AREAS - Support for preservation and/or protection of certain critical areas (ecologically fragile estuaries and coastal areas, farmland, flood plain, aquifers, and natural areas); erosion and sedimentation controls; and coordination among all levels of government in decisions involving major facilities.

FARMLAND - Support of a farmland preservation program.

Voter Representation/ Electoral Systems Position

(elements in bold italic text are Delaware additions to the LWVUS position)

Position in Brief:

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

Position in Full:

LWVDE promotes 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 *secure*, verifiable and auditable
- Promote access to voting
- Maximize effective votes/minimize wasted votes
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting
- ***Discourage negative campaigning***
- Implement alternatives to plurality voting
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail

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

The League supports the implementation of Ranked-Choice Voting in elections for representation at all levels of Delaware government, including school board, municipal, county, state and national, for both primary and general elections.

LWVDE 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.