



Social Policy

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Background: Equality of Opportunity was based on LWVUS position adopted 1975; amended 2021.

EQUAL RIGHTS

Promote economic, social, legal, and constitutional equality for all.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Background: Public Education consensus after study in 1968, amended 1993; amended 2013; amended 2021; amended 2023.

Promote quality public education for all students through the secondary level, with a continuing emphasis on the equalization of financing of public schools, and consolidation of school districts, when feasible, to provide for improved administration, better use of facilities, and broadened school instructional offerings.

Support developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Improve quality of teaching through such means as ongoing professional development, more comprehensive teacher training programs, and higher salaries.

Support appointment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Support increased citizen participation through formation of school site and district public school advisory committees.

Continue efforts to improve administrative efficiency and judicious use of funds.

State funding should be sufficient to support state curriculum requirements in all counties.

Hold all schools and entities that receive public funds to the same educational accountability and transparency standards as traditional public schools.

Oppose shifting public school dollars to private and for-profit entities: This includes vouchers tax credits, scholarships or other use of public tax dollars to fund private and parochial school (real or virtual) attendance. The League of Women Voters of North Carolina supports the following:

- That full access to a PK-12 public education that prepares individuals for their future as global citizens, is a basic right and should not be subject to discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, geography, socio-economic class, linguistic difference or disability.

Our recommendations would include:

- Full implementation of the Leandro Comprehensive Remediation Plan priorities



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with recommended action steps and timelines adopted and funded in order to meet the constitutional requirement of a sound, basic education for all students.

- Enacting policies, standards and practices that promote equity of opportunity and access with the explicit recognition that diversity of educational professionals as well as students is a positive factor contributing to the success of individuals, schools, the workforce and the community.

- Supports provision of secure, sufficient and equitable state funding that accomplishes the following:

- Full funding of birth-K programs for all children including inclusive education and appropriate services for those with health, learning, language, physical, social, emotional challenges and other special needs. This includes funding policies and formulas related to special education and specialized services.

- Sufficient and appropriate resources to promote continuous student growth and achievement PK-12 including:

a. Safe, secure and sufficient space, equipment and materials and fully accessible virtual options for all general and specialized classrooms, programs and services across all grades; including full access to high-speed internet and cell service available to all NC households set as a legislative priority essential for ensuring equal access to education for all students.

b. Manageable class sizes and caseloads that allow for differentiated and responsive instruction and student services PK-12;

c. Sufficient and equitable access for all students to up-to-date instructional resources, including high quality virtual learning and assessment options that expand instructional environments within the public school system;

d. Pay scales and benefits that attract and sustain sufficient numbers of qualified classroom teachers, pupil services professionals, administrators and support personnel. This includes actions that address achieving diversity across the workforce.

- Policies, working conditions and school cultures that respect professionalism and the teaching profession and which promote educator and administrator effectiveness including: ongoing professional learning, salaries competitive with the national average, access to up-to-date and sufficient classroom equipment and materials; evaluation systems and reporting that reflect the complexity of teaching and learning both in person and virtual; and civil, respectful communications.

- An equitable, meaningful and viable method for evaluating all public schools -including charter schools supported by taxpayer money -developed using input from a balanced representative body including public school superintendents.



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Background: Tax policy adopted May 1989; amended 1993; The League was credited with making an impact on the tax structure by lobbying for a tax fairness bill which passed in the legislature in 1989.

TAX POLICY

Support an equitable and efficient system of taxation in North Carolina that will adequately fund needed services at both the state and local level.

- The burden of taxes should be in proportion to the taxpayers' ability to pay.
- All taxpayers have the duty/right to contribute to the common good.
- For government to tax in excess of the requirements of the common good or to waste tax revenues is unjust since this unfairly deprives the taxpayer of his property and the product of his labor without a corresponding common benefit.
- The taxation and appropriation process should allow government the necessary flexibility for responsible fiscal management.
- The use of tax laws as incentives or disincentives to action should be viewed in the light of the common good.
- The granting of tax preferences (e.g., exemptions, deductions, etc.) should be genuinely premised on the promotion of the common interest and not upon special interest or favoritism.
- Taxes once established should be collected with even-handed enforcement.

- The norm for choosing a form of taxation should first be the equitable distribution of civic burden and not the ease of collection or lack of popular opposition. However, where there are equivalent, equitable options, the simpler methods should be used.
- The tax system should be diversified to provide a broad revenue base and to minimize the effect of imperfections in any one tax. Each form of taxation should not be examined in isolation but evaluated as part of the total tax system. Further, the impact of tax laws should be consistent with other public policies (e.g., the conservation of energy, the preservation of neighborhoods, etc).

Corporate Income Taxes. Support a corporate income tax schedule with graduated rates increasing as income rises. General business franchise rates, taxes and other franchise rates should be reviewed and adjusted. Exemptions for business should be reconsidered.

Highway Fund Taxes. If more revenue is needed for the highway fund, the highway use tax and overweight permits should be increased.

Individual Income Tax. The current state individual income tax system should be simplified and better reflect ability to pay. Methods of determining individual taxable income should be aligned more closely with the federal income tax system. The state can apply its own policies through adjustments to income and levels of deductions. The standard deduction should be increased and provisions made for future adjustments through periodic review and revision. Tax progressivism should be established with a broader range of tax rates, and the threshold for paying any income tax needs to be raised. Any exemptions should be applied to all types of pensions.

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Sales Tax. Regressive taxes on essential products and services, such as food and utilities, should be removed. Current exemptions and preferential sales tax rates should be reviewed to determine if they are justified, consistent, and equitable. There should be an equitable extension of the sales tax to all services.

New Revenue Sources. All local governments should be given the option to utilize new revenue sources such as impact fees, land transfer fees, and room occupancy fees. There should be a severance tax for the removal of natural products from the ground.

HOUSING

Background: 1983 resolution

Promote equal access to housing for all citizens of North Carolina. Support the adoption of a statewide housing policy and a minimum statewide housing code. Support a state initiative to increase the supply of housing for low-income persons in the wake of decreased federal funding.

CHILD CARE

Background: Day Care reached June 1980, amended 1993

Promote the availability of quality day care to all North Carolina families, regardless of socioeconomic status, through adequate state and federal standards, financial assistance, and monitoring the enforcement of those standards.

The League supports:

- higher standards for licensing requirements, abolishing 20% tolerance above the number of children in the licensing specifications
- better staff training
- judging compliance at group level, equalization of licensing and certification standards
- strengthening existing monitoring programs and policies, greater emphasis on regulations and monitoring in the areas of health and safety, specific standards and required registration of family day care homes
- requiring an educational developmental program for all center-based day care
- a single state day care unit for licensing, certification, and monitoring
- a citizen majority on the Day Care Licensing Commission
- federal assistance to reimburse cost of care at a ceiling, to assist licensed centers meet certification standards, to help families needing day care but exceeding Title guidelines



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- abolishing socioeconomic segregation within the day care system
- encouraging state to purchase care from private centers
- encouraging families to purchase care from certified centers
- diversity of child care options
- more services to families with special needs, including: transportation, after-school care, migrant workers, families with disabilities or emotionally disturbed parents/children
- industry supported day care through tax incentives to businesses, scholarships for purchasing care, on-site care
- a program of community and parental awareness

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK

Background: Early Intervention for Children at Risk based on LWVUS convention concurrence 1994.

Support policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well-being and encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include: 1) child abuse/neglect prevention; 2) teen pregnancy prevention; 3) quality healthcare, including nutrition and prenatal care; 4) early childhood education; 5) developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3; 6) family support services; and 7) violence prevention.

ELDER CARE

Background: Elder Care adopted by LWVNC state board 1993, amended at Convention 1993.

Support the state in taking an aggressive role in the provision of services to dependent older adults.

Create standards and enforcement mechanisms.

- Establish, monitor and enforce standards defining state and county responsibilities for institutions ranging from in-home residential care to nursing homes.
- Expand and improve Ombudsman program services.
- Improve opportunities for citizen participation in establishing and monitoring county and state policies and programs.

Ensure access to services.

- Establish in each county a single point of entry for information, referral, and intake for dependent older adults and families in need of assistance with their care
- Guarantee equitable access to all services
- Equalize formulas for county funding from the state based on age, race, poverty and other demographic status of the county
- Establish eligibility for public subsidies for services based on age, income, functional impairment, and type of residence and family support
- Expand and improve Medicaid eligibility

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Require minimum services. Create, in every county, access to the following core services, not necessarily provided by the county, but accessible through county referral, for example: transportation, adult daycare, in-home aides, congregate meals, home-delivered meals, protective services, medical equipment, and therapies.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Background: An Initial study in 1952 was of state agencies with an emphasis on the penal system. There was a study of juvenile justice 1974-79 and a 1980 study of 11 juvenile detention center/training schools leading to further honing of the criminal justice position. A 1982 study centered on victims of crime and led to a consensus on that issue. Amended 2021 concurrence with LWV of California position.

Promote fair and equal treatment of all citizens involved in the criminal justice system, including victims and witnesses.

Promote swift, sure, and fair disposition for every defendant and promote measures to assure the relief of overcrowding and inmate idleness; support improved services to juveniles through mandatory statewide guidelines, special training for personnel, and elimination of inter-agency fragmentation; support improvements in education and/or training for employment, and family visitation for incarcerated females; provide special assistance to inmates with disabilities; and encourage increased use of alternatives to incarceration for non-violent crimes.

Support the establishment of a witness assistance program in every court district.

Support limited compensation for all victims of violent crimes, including services and financial support for all victims regardless of their income.

Establish community alternatives to incarceration in state training schools and local jails.

Encourage increased attention by policy makers to the needs of females in jails and prisons (family visitation, education, vocational training and work release opportunities).

Build public trust and positive community relationships through law enforcement engagement with community members and encourage community participation in the development of law enforcement policy. Staff law enforcement departments to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve, establish recruitment efforts that reflect this principle and 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.

Provide law enforcement accountability via independent citizen oversight of law enforcement and publicly available data on officer conduct. Disseminate information to the public about law enforcement policies, recruitment, procedures for complaint/commendation, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens and officers in interactions with each other.



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The League of Women Voters of North Carolina supports non-partisan School Board elections.*

*Addition to public education position, pending action at LWNVC Council 2024

After the conclusion of the 2023 LWNVC Convention, it was brought to our attention by a convention delegate that the process to propose an amendment to our Program did not follow the procedure outlined in the LWNVC bylaws and that the motion and vote should therefore be rescinded. The amendment to add a sentence about supporting the non-partisan election of school board members was brought from the floor, voted on and passed. At the time, the error in the process was not noted by the chair or our parliamentarian. However, bylaws stipulate that proposed Program changes must be submitted to the LWNVC board for review at least three months in advance of the convention. Upon approval by the board, the proposed changes are then shared with the membership. Because the amendment from the floor did not follow that procedure, we are designating the motion as "Pending" and have asked for the Public Education LAT to provide supporting data for the amendment and it will be reintroduced for a vote at the 2024 Council.

Jennifer McMillan Rubin
President

