



# Representative Government

Background: In the 1950s a state study on the North Carolina Constitution, reapportionment and redistricting shaped the initial representative government positions. An Election Law study in 1985 resulted in a comprehensive analysis of election laws, training procedures, and registration and voting procedures. Support for legislation regulating campaign contributions and spending has been included since 1973. The position on Redistricting was added by concurrence in 1994 and amended in 2019. Election of the President position was adopted 2023 based on LWVUS position.

## Goals

- Government should be open, accountable, ethical, and responsive to citizens.
- Citizen participation on state boards should be encouraged.
- Measures to eliminate barriers to voting should be encouraged.
- Authority for administration and enforcement of election laws should be centralized in the State Board of Elections.
- Elections should be applied consistently across the state and from one county to another.

- A permanent, uniform voter registration should be maintained across the state.
- Training of election officials should be mandated and paid for by the state at both state and county levels.

## ELECTION LAWS

Promote measures that safeguard the rights of the voter and encourage clear and democratic election procedures. Promote and support election laws in North Carolina that emphasize full participation of all citizens in the democratic process.

**Election Process.** The US Constitution requires nationwide and statewide reapportionment and redistricting based on the decennial census, providing an opportunity to review mandates of the North Carolina Constitution as well as of the Voting Rights Act. The original LWV positions support centralization of authority for administration and enforcement of election laws and on the consistency of application of such laws across the state and from one county to another.

**Redistricting.** The League of Women Voters believes 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



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and steps of the process, should be subject to open meeting laws, and should provide that any redistricting plan be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote. The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, and on which any plan should be judged, must be enforceable in court and require substantially equal population, geographic contiguity, and effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities. The standards should provide (to the extent possible) for promotion of partisan fairness, preservation and protection of "communities of interest," and 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.

The standards should explicitly reject protection of incumbents, through such devices as considering an incumbent's address, and preferential treatment for a political party, through such devices as considering party affiliation, voting history and candidate residence.

Congressional districts, both houses of the state legislature, county, as well as municipal government districts including boards of education, should be apportioned primarily according to population. Districts should be single-member, compact, convenient, contiguous, and should reflect a community of interest. Specific standards of fair representation as required by the National Voting Rights Acts should be assured.

Remedial provisions should be established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. Specific provision 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.

**Campaign Finance.** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

## Election of the President/Vice President

The League believes the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice President is essential to representative government and therefore supports:

- Abolishment of the Electoral College by Constitutional Amendment
- Use of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact as an acceptable way to achieve the goal of direct popular vote for the election of the President until the Electoral College is abolished.



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## **CITIZEN RIGHTS**

Background: The state position is based on the National consensus and position concerning individual liberties established at the 1976 LWVUS Convention.

### **Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.**

Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.



## **NON-PARTISAN SELECTION**

Background: After a 1972 study, the 1973 Convention adopted the non-partisan merit selection of judges. In 1989, the selection of judges was a hot topic in the NC General Assembly and LWVNC reviewed our long-standing position to find areas of compatibility. The statement was amended in 1991 to reflect a willingness on the part of the League to support proposals that used mechanisms other than "merit" for selection of judges. The Henderson County LWV conducted a study and adopted a position on the election of county commissioners. The State board voted unanimously to recommend the LWV Henderson County position adopted at the 2005 Convention.

The League supports:

- Non-partisan selection of judges
- The concept of a broadly-based judiciary nominating commission for the selection of well-qualified nominees and appointment preferably from the nominees.
- The option for counties to elect commissioners on a partisan or nonpartisan basis.

