



# MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK<sup>®</sup> FOR ALL

## PROPOSED 2016-2018 LWVUS PROGRAM

### THE PROGRAM ADOPTION PROCESS

The vote on the Proposed Program at Convention 2016 will be the culmination of months of Program Planning by state and local Leagues and Inter-League Organizations (ILOs). A proposed program was sent to Leagues along with the Program Planning Leaders Guide. A total of two hundred and thirty (230) Leagues submitted recommendations to LWVUS. In addition, the LWVUS Board considered input received on an online survey in Fall 2015 in which members strongly supported a League-wide focus on core democracy issues, including voter service and protection, money in politics and redistricting. In April 2016, the LWVUS Board adopted a Proposed Program based on recommendations from Leagues. Delegates to Convention will vote on the Proposed Program and on any not-recommended items submitted in accordance with the LWVUS bylaws and voted consideration by the Convention delegates.

### RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF

The Board recommends retaining all current LWVUS positions in the areas of Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy for the 2016-2018 biennium. Based on forty-nine (49) program planning responses from state and local Leagues and ILOs, the LWVUS Board recommends a concurrence with the Behavioral Health position of the League of Women Voters of Colorado. And based on two hundred twenty nine (229) program planning responses from state and local Leagues and ILOs, the LWVUS Board recommends a League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work<sup>®</sup> including a concurrence with the Redistricting position proposed by the LWVUS Redistricting Task Force. The LWVUS entire recommended program is outlined in detail on pages 30-33.

### TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM ADOPTION

- Read the Program Section and talk to your members before you head to Convention. Delegates go to Convention “informed, but not instructed.”
- Review information on the League Management site: [forum.lwv.org](http://forum.lwv.org). In the Convention section, you will find information on the Proposed Program, the Program Planning Process and *Impact on Issues* with all LWVUS positions.
- Join the Convention Google Group to find out what other delegates and League members are interested in.
- Ask for help in understanding the process both before and during convention by contacting Program Outreach Chair Barbara Zia at [progplan@lwv.org](mailto:progplan@lwv.org) or LWVUS Program Planning staff Betsy Lawson [blawson@lwv.org](mailto:blawson@lwv.org).
- Know the Rules: LWVUS Bylaws, Article XII, Principles and Program page 48 as well as Convention Rules page 19, especially Rules 10 and 11 for procedure.
- Attend the delegate briefing session at Convention. Parliamentarian Martha Rollins is a neutral source of information. You can reach Martha at [mrollinslwvshr@aol.com](mailto:mrollinslwvshr@aol.com).
- Attend the Friday night Program Q & A.
- Attend caucuses on issues that are listed on page 4-13.
- To move an item for consideration, it must be on the list of not recommended items on page 31. Motions are submitted in writing. Know how to word a motion. The motion would read “I move consideration of the not-recommended item (give exact description of the item that you are proposing) as an amendment to the Proposed Program. Make sure that your motion is clearly stated and grammatically correct.
- Watch the microphones during Plenary. In the early stages of discussion, the chair recognizes the floor mikes in continuous sequence. During debate, mikes are designated pro and con, so delegates can hear each point of view presented alternately.
- Leave Convention ready to support the Program adopted by delegates. Vigorous debate that ends in organizational commitment is the League way.

# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

## PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR 2016-2018

Based on Program Planning responses, the LWVUS Board recommends retaining all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy.

The LWVUS Board recommends a League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work®.

The LWVUS Board recommends a concurrence with the Redistricting position proposed by the LWVUS Redistricting Task Force.

The LWVUS Board recommends a concurrence with the Behavioral Health position of the LWV Colorado, including amending the LWVUS Health Care position.

### CAMPAIGN FOR MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK®

This comprehensive program would build on our accomplishments as part of the 2014-16, Key Structures of Democracy Program. It would engage Leagues nationwide in advancing core democracy issues.

- Voter protection and mobilization
- Election reform
- Money in politics, constitutional amendment and redistricting

This includes Concurrence on the Floor of Convention with the Redistricting position proposed by the LWVUS Redistricting Task Force.

#### *Looking Ahead to 2016 and Beyond*

#### **Overview of Recommended Program Focus: Campaign for Making Democracy Work®**

As Convention 2016 and Election 2016 and their outcomes draw near, it is abundantly clear that our work is far from finished in *making democracy work* for every voter and every voice in our communities. From our interactions with League leaders and members, from the results of a recent member survey, and based on the political outlook for the next two years, we believe that every League will likely continue to focus resources on the core democracy issues that are part of the 2014-2016 program. The LWVUS Board believes that our 2016-2018 program should recognize this reality and do the same. The opportunities that we see over the next biennium are as follows:

#### *Voting Rights and Voter Protection*

In Congress, we must continue to push for restoration of the Voting Rights Act by supporting the bipartisan Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA). We must continue to support positive reforms such as online voter registration for all, portable voter registration within each state, and reforms to provisional voting, areas for which there are already pending bills. We must continue pushing this administration and the next to comply with the National Voter Registration Act by allowing voters to register through the federally-facilitated health care exchanges.

#### *Money in Politics*

Congress can take action to reform money in politics. Including the Stop Super PAC-Candidate Coordination Act in the House, there is

legislation on each of the three pillars of our work on campaign finance: disclosure, stopping Super PACs, and public financing of congressional and presidential elections. There is also an anti-bundling bill. In addition, Congress can and must ensure meaningful enforcement of existing and future laws. The Federal Election Commission can't fix itself, but Congress surely can. These reforms can be made despite recent decisions of the Supreme Court.

#### *Supporting Voting Rights and Voter Protection in the States*

In the states the fight continues in statehouses and courthouses to prevent legislation that suppresses the vote. Support also continues for reforms like on-line voter registration and expansion of early voting. These efforts are most successful when state Leagues can rely on LWVUS for resources in the form of shared expertise and coordination of strategies and messaging. State Leagues play a critical role, too, in developing partnerships and coalitions to protect the vote, not only in state legislatures but also in local communities. Collaborating with LWVUS, state Leagues take the leading role in advocacy for voter protection but also in coordinating statewide campaigns around voting issues.

#### *Supporting Voting Rights and Voter Protection in Local Communities*

In recent years local League voter service has joined the front lines of voter protection. The 2016 election will be the first presidential election in 50 years in which voters cannot rely on the protections of the Voting Rights Act to ensure free and fair access to the polls. Never has a local presence--real people in real communities--been a greater asset for the League. Registering voters in underserved communities, high schools, community colleges, and at naturalization ceremonies has become the primary focus of our voter service work. Long-standing relationships with elections

officials have already produced good results in preventing careless or not so careless decisions regarding precinct locations and distribution of polling place resources in the wake of the Shelby decision. More is required. It is critical that, in this upcoming election, we promote and support a local presence in our most vulnerable communities by working together with community partners and using our 95 years of election experience to protect voters in the next election.

***Voting Rights and Voter Protection Following Election 2016***

The past five years have shown that elections have important consequences for both candidates and voters. Long lines at the polls in 2012 prompted the president to appoint the Presidential Commission on Election Administration to examine best election practices from the perspective of voter experience. The resulting recommendations provide an excellent road map for election reform at state and local levels. The League and our partners will be on the ground next November, but our election observations are meaningless unless we take them back to the appropriate decision makers.

Election 2016 will be the most expensive in our history. The issue of money in politics does not end the day after an election, nor is it confined to federal elections or the federal government. Leagues are working hard to update our campaign finance reform position, and it is incumbent on all of us to work at every level of government to ensure that power is in the hands of the many and not the few.

Redistricting reform continues to be a goal for the League. Armed with a position every state League can use, we look forward to more robust efforts to accomplish this goal. LWVUS will provide both venues for coordination and expert assistance. Progress has been made already, but League-wide support can strengthen the effort. State Leagues will take the lead in their states as we look to 2020 and beyond.

In addition, given the current political climate, there will likely be continued calls to amend the U.S. Constitution through a convention. The lessons learned through our study of the amendment process will inform LWV's education and advocacy in this area.

**NOT-RECOMMENDED ITEMS ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION**

To be moved for consideration at Convention, a not-recommended item must be moved for and granted consideration before delegates can debate adopting them as amendments or substitutes to the Proposed Program. Those moving for consideration for concurrence at Convention must have met the requirements of LWVUS Bylaws Article XII, Sec. 2 (b). Delegates advocating a not-recommended item should refer to Convention Rule 10.

**List of Not-Recommended Items**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Agriculture                             | Fair Lobbying Practices                              | Nuclear Waste                            |
| Anti-Fraud Regulation                   | Federal Funding for Updating State Voting Technology | Pharmaceuticals                          |
| Carbon Tax                              | Financial Institutions                               | Prison Reform                            |
| Charter Schools                         | Gender and Same Sex Rights                           | Privatization                            |
| Child Care                              | Global Climate Change                                | Public Education                         |
| Civic Engagement                        | Gun Control/Gun Safety                               | Public Financing                         |
| Civics                                  | Healthcare/Affordable Care Act                       | Rural Communities                        |
| Climate Change                          | Human Trafficking                                    | Single Payer                             |
| Congress                                | Immigration  | Social Policy Updates                    |
| D.C. Statehood                          | Incarceration System                                 | Substance Abuse                          |
| Death with Dignity                      | Infrastructure/Transportation                        | Sustainable Planet/Sustainable Democracy |
| Developing Countries                    | Medicare   | Systemic Racism                          |
| Drug Policy                             | Mental Health  | Trade/Trans Pacific Partnership          |
| Early Intervention for Children at Risk | Minimum Wage   | Voting Day Holiday                       |
| Equal Rights Amendment                  | National Security                                    | Women's Health Care/Reproductive Health  |
| Equality of Opportunity                 | Nuclear Energy                                       |  |
| Fair Housing                            |  |  |

## PROPOSED CONCURRENCE #1

### *Position on Redistricting*

#### **Redistricting Position in Brief:**

Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

#### **Redistricting Position:**

1. 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.
2. Every redistricting process should include:
  - a. Specific timelines for the steps leading to a redistricting plan;
  - b. Full disclosure throughout the process and public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption:
    - i. Redistricting at all levels of government must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process,
    - ii. Should be subject to open meeting laws;
  - c. A provision that any redistricting plan should be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote;
  - d. Remedial provisions established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. Specific provisions should be made for court review of redistricting measures and for courts to require the redistricting authority to act on a specific schedule:
    - i. Time limits should be set for initiating court action for review,
    - ii. The courts should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met.
3. The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, and on which any plan should be judged, must:
  - a. Be enforceable in court;
  - b. Require:
    - i. Substantially equal population,
    - ii. Geographic contiguity, and
    - iii. Effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities.
  - c. Provide for (to the extent possible):
    - i. Promotion of partisan fairness,
    - ii. Preservation and protection of “communities of interest,” and
    - iii. Respect for boundaries of municipalities and counties.
  - d. Compactness and competitiveness may also be considered as criteria so long as they do not conflict with the above criteria
  - e. Explicitly reject:
    - i. Protection of incumbents, through such devices as considering an incumbent’s address, and
    - ii. Preferential treatment for a political party, through such devices as considering party affiliation, voting history and candidate residence.

This position does not supersede any existing state League redistricting position.

## PROPOSED CONCURRENCE #2

### Behavioral Health

In addition, the LWVUS Board recommends a concurrence with the LWV Colorado position on Behavioral Health including amending the LWVUS Health Care position to include the following as the second sentence under Basic Level of Quality Care:

*Every U.S. resident should have access to affordable, quality in- and out- patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care.*

#### Position on Behavioral Health

Support for:

- Behavioral Health as the nationally accepted term that includes both mental illness and substance use disorder.
- Access for all people to affordable, quality in- and out-patient behavioral health care, including needed medications and supportive services.
- Behavioral Health care that is integrated with, and achieves parity with, physical health care.

- Early and affordable behavioral health diagnosis and treatment for children and youth from early childhood through adolescence.
- Early and appropriate diagnosis and treatment for children and adolescents that is family-focused and community-based.
- Access to safe and stable housing for people with behavioral health challenges, including those who are chronically homeless.
- Effective re-entry planning and follow-up for people released from both behavioral health hospitalization and the criminal justice system.
- Problem solving or specialty courts, including mental health and drug courts, in all judicial districts to provide needed treatment and avoid inappropriate entry into the criminal justice system.
- Health education — from early childhood throughout life — that integrates all aspects of social, emotional and physical health and wellness.
- Efforts to decrease the stigmatization of, and normalize, behavioral health problems and care.

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## SUMMARY OF LWVUS PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

### REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

#### VOTING RIGHTS

**Citizen's Right to Vote.** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

#### DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation.

Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

#### ELECTION PROCESS

**Apportionment.** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

**Money in Politics.** Campaign finance regulation should enhance political equality for all citizens, ensure transparency, protect representative democracy from distortion by big money, and combat corruption and undue influence in government. The League believes that campaign spending must be restricted but not banned. The

League supports public financing, full disclosure, abolishing SuperPACs, and creating an effective enforcement agency.

**Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct-popular-vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

#### CITIZEN RIGHTS

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

#### Considerations for Evaluating Constitutional Amendment

**Proposals.** In addition to League positions, consideration should be given to whether a proposal addresses matters of abiding importance, makes our political system more democratic or protects individual rights, could be achieved by less difficult legislative or political approaches, and is more suited to a constitutional and general approach than to a statutory and detailed approach.

#### Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S.

**Constitution.** Concerned that there are many unresolved questions



about a Constitutional Convention. Certain conditions must be in place: limited to a single specific topic, full transparency, delegates elected by population, and voting by delegates not by state.

**Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

## **CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY**

**Congress.** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance.

**The Presidency.** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

## **PRIVATIZATION**

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

## **UNITED NATIONS**

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

## **TRADE**

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

## **U.S. RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## **ARMS CONTROL**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

## **MILITARY POLICY AND DEFENSE SPENDING**

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

## **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION CONTROL**

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

**Air Quality.** Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

**Energy.** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

**Land Use.** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

**Water Resources.** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

**Waste Management.** Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

**Nuclear Issues.** Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

## **AGRICULTURE POLICY**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

**Federal Agriculture Policies.** Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide adequate safety of our food supply.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

## **EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

**Equal Rights.** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**Education, Employment and Housing.** Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

**Federal Role in Public Education.** Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.

## **FISCAL POLICY**

**Tax Policy.** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

**Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.

**Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

## **HEALTH CARE**

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

## **MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS**

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Income Assistance.** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

**Support Services.** Provide essential support services.

**Housing Supply.** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

## **CHILD CARE**

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

## **EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK**

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

## **VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

## **GUN CONTROL**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

## **URBAN POLICY**

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

## **DEATH PENALTY**

The LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty.

## **SENTENCING POLICY**

The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

# **THE 1920 LEGACY SOCIETY**

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. is pleased to recognize members and friends who have included the League's Education Fund in their estate plans as members of the **1920 Legacy Society**.

Members of the 1920 Legacy Society receive special benefits such as invitations to participate in conference calls with the League President and senior staff members, special recognition at Convention, personal invitations to League events, complimentary copies of League publications, recognition in the League's Annual Report and more.

For more information about including the League in your estate plans, or to let us know that you have already included us, please call the LWV Development department at (202) 263-1355 or e-mail [development@lww.org](mailto:development@lww.org).