



February 24, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20510

Dear President Biden,

As you make the final preparations for the State of the Union, the League of Women Voters of the United States would like to offer some insight into what we hope you will touch on during your speech. We are hopeful you will use the power of this seat to continue to address the inequalities in our society while challenging the systems that put these inequalities in place. Through the use of executive orders and your sway with Congress we know there is much we have left to accomplish together. Here's what we will be watching for on March 1:

RESTORE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

We must find ways to prevent discrimination in voting by whatever means necessary. Restoring the *Voting Rights Act* (VRA) will strengthen our elections by eliminating obstructive laws that have kept eligible voters of color from exercising their rights at the ballot box. Since the Supreme Court's *Shelby County v. Holder* decision rolled back key provisions of the *Voting Rights Act* in 2013, we have seen the process of voting become more challenging, especially for women and communities of color. In recent elections, voters have faced a variety of obstacles, from reduced polling locations that lead to long lines and stringent voter identification requirements, to the illegal removal of registered voters from the rolls and restrictions that limit voters' options when it comes to how they cast their ballot. As you are aware, the *Voting Rights Act* was created to ensure that every American has the freedom to vote. To give up on its protections is to fail the people it is intended to protect. *The League requests that you continue to direct the US Senate to bring a voting rights bill to the floor for a vote and use whatever tools possible to get the VRA restored.*

ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS

We must rise to the challenge and meet the threats posed by climate change, especially the impact on the most vulnerable Americans. Tackling this priority requires an ambitious



and comprehensive reduction of domestic emissions, cooperating with international partners, and building critical resiliency into our infrastructure and communities most likely to be affected by natural disasters and industrial transition.

Since the late 2000s, LWV has fervently advocated for a coordinated government response to global climate change. We have long lobbied for caps on pollution, investments in renewable energy, carbon pricing, and stronger EPA regulations on methane and other gases. More recently, the League has expanded our work to focus on climate justice: the impacts of climate change on younger generations, indigenous communities and people of color, working-class neighborhoods, and families in economic transition. *The League requests that you re-affirm your commitment to climate change and ensure that you make investments in renewable energy and direct agencies to enforce climate regulations, domestically and abroad.*

ENSURE EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

The time has come to push the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) over the finish line. The required thirty-eight states have ratified the amendment and it is time for the National Archivist to proceed with the certification. The addition of the Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution would address the root cause of inequality by amending our constitution. The League is an organization that was born out of the movement to secure voting rights for women. We have continued to fight for equal rights and equal opportunities for all. Despite the significant progress that women have made towards equality over the years, women still face systematic discrimination in the form of unequal pay, workplace harassment, and domestic violence. We ask the 117th Congress to support the ratification of the 19th Amendment. *The League asks that you direct the U.S. Archivist to certify the ERA to make it part of the Constitution.*

ENSURE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS ARE MET

Lack of access to a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost to all U.S. residents has been highlighted by the ongoing crisis, but other inequalities within our social support network have also been laid bare by the pandemic. Americans are hurting and not just in the physical sense. We must get people back to work by creating employment opportunities that pay a living wage. We must ensure that workers and their families in industries hit hard by the pandemic can maintain their homes. Policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services and delivery of care, job placement, unemployment benefits, and rental assistances needed to protect our most vulnerable communities. The Leagues works to provide millions of Americans across the country with objective information about the health care, housing, and community services available to sustain the public into ensure the health and safety of all. *The*



League asks that you continue to prioritize healthcare systems and people to ensure that all Americans are safe, and that money doesn't become an obstacle to adequate health care

As we continue to work to impact policies the League of Women Voters of the United States will continue to stand by you to achieve your policy goals, while also holding you accountable for missing the mark. We hope to continue to build our partnership as we move our democracy forward in the next year and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Virginia Kase Solomón". The signature is written in a cursive style with large, flowing letters.

Virginia Kase Solomón
CEO