



April 18, 2023

To: Members of Congress
From: Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO
Re: The League of Women Voters' Priorities for the 118th Congress

Greetings,

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), I write to outline the legislative and policy priorities on which LWVUS would like to work with your office in the 118th Congress. LWVUS is a century-seasoned, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to protecting the right to vote. We are a grassroots organization comprised of more than 500,000 members and supporters across more than 750 local and state Leagues nationwide. LWVUS focuses on advocacy, education, litigation, and organizing to achieve our mission to empower voters and defend democracy.

Our top legislative priorities fall into two categories of work: Making Democracy Work[®] and policies that improve the lives of the American people. Below are more details about each of these categories of work.

Making Democracy Work[®]

The League of Women Voters is dedicated to Making Democracy Work[®] by ensuring a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters. To improve elections and strengthen our democracy, we urge the 118th Congress to focus on promoting voting rights protections and reforms, increasing transparency around money in politics, protecting the District of Columbia from burdensome oversight, and standardizing redistricting nationwide.

Voting rights protections and reforms

Voting rights reforms are necessary for a free and fair democracy. Voting is a fundamental principle, and all Americans deserve equal opportunities to make their voices heard in our democracy. Legislative action to improve and expand voting access should include restoring the *Voting Rights Act*, eliminating laws that impose obstacles to voting, and finding ways to make it easier for eligible voters to participate- like automatic voter registration and no-excuse absentee voting.

Transparency in money in politics

Political spending — particularly *undisclosed* political spending — has exploded in recent elections. Transparency is key to a healthy democracy. Disclosure of all spending in elections — whether by corporations, unions, individuals, or any other groups — is vital in allowing voters to make informed decisions. Legislative action to improve this issue includes supporting provisions like those included in the *DISCLOSE Act* and ending candidate-superPAC coordination.



Protecting the District of Columbia from burdensome oversight

The District of Columbia is home to over 700,000 people, yet it lacks voting members in both the US House and Senate. The people of Washington, DC deserve full representation in Congress and to be free of congressional interference in their local governance. Legislative action on this issue should include protecting DC from unnecessary oversight by members of Congress and by granting DC statehood.

Standardizing redistricting rules

Gerrymandering is a practice that weakens the strength of our republic and allows elected officials to select their voters, which undermines voters' right to select their elected officials. Standardized redistricting rules ensure that line drawers (legislators, independent demographers, citizen commissions, or other decision-making bodies) have uniform guidelines for drawing lines each cycle. The most recent redistricting cycle, in 2021, was the first cycle conducted without the full protections of the *Voting Rights Act*. Legislative action to improve redistricting includes restoring the *Voting Rights Act*, establishing national standards for redistricting, and promoting transparency and citizen-led redistricting processes, when possible.

Policies that improve the lives of the American people

From advancing health care to protecting the environment, voters care about many issues that impact their daily lives. In this realm, we have several priorities for action in the 118th Congress.

The League urges Congress to prioritize issues of equality within our society by certifying the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution and pursuing comprehensive immigration reform. Legislative actions to improve these issues include affirming the validity of the Equal Rights Amendment as part of the US Constitution and supporting the *DREAM Act* or alternate codification of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

LWVUS also urges Congress to prioritize issues of public health by addressing the climate crisis, increasing access to health care for all, and protecting reproductive rights. Legislative action to improve these issues includes focusing on bipartisan solutions to mitigate climate risks and centering climate justice to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change in historically marginalized communities. Congress should also seek to set policies that protect reproductive rights by codifying the right to an abortion and protecting contraception.

LWVUS hopes to be a resource to members of the 118th Congress and appreciates the opportunity to provide a high-level outline of our priority issues for the next two years. Please do not hesitate to contact our staff via Jessica Jones Capparell, director of government affairs, at JJones@lwv.org, or Kristen Kern, federal policy and advocacy manager, at KKern@lwv.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia Kase Solomón".

Virginia Kase Solomón, CEO