

### Identifying Policy Priorities Across Issue Areas

LWVUS’s identification of policy priorities requires first separating issues into categories- especially understanding how to prioritize our core, democracy issues, without neglecting important issues outside of those core issues. LWVUS separates our work into two main portfolios of policy work: the campaign for **Making Democracy Work®** (MDW) and several social issues which we collectively refer to as “emerging issues,” which include climate change, criminal justice, immigration, health care (including reproductive rights), and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The campaign for Making Democracy Work® was launched by LWVUS in the 1990s to focus on five areas integral to the health of our democracy: voter participation, campaign finance reform, diversity of representation, civic education and knowledge, and civic participation (*Impact on Issues*, 17).

At the League, we recognize that social issues impact people’s ability to participate equitably in our democracy. This recognition supports our application of a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens to our advocacy work across the Making Democracy Work® and Emerging Issues portfolios.

Often Leagues find that volunteers are very passionate about social issues- or the issues that fall under our “emerging issues” portfolio, so finding an application of the League’s democracy expertise in a social issue can help speak to volunteers’ interests. As an organization that was founded on the principles of voting rights, it is important to leverage the League’s expertise and credibility as a century-seasoned leader in voting rights advocacy in all of our issue advocacy.

After the most important issues under the Making Democracy Work® portfolio, Leagues should consider opportunities to prioritize issues that overlap the categories of Making Democracy Work® and emerging issues. The Venn diagram below illustrates examples of this overlap. For example, legislation that seeks to raise thresholds of citizen-led ballot initiatives or make citizen-led ballot initiatives more difficult directly impacts the ability of advocates to execute successful ballot initiative campaigns around relevant social issues like reproductive rights. Working on an issue like the ballot initiative example is one way to carve out the League’s niche expertise in an issue with wide-reaching social impacts.

