

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

League of Women Voters® of the United States

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive (page 8).

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote - Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote (page 11).

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 (page 17).

Election Process

Apportionment - Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population (page 19).

Redistricting - Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation (page 20).

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 (page 22).

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 (page 27).

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation - Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making (page 28).

Individual Liberties - Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights (page 30).

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 (page 31).

Constitutional Conventions - 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 selected by population, and voting by delegates not by state (page 32).

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices - Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices (page 32).

Congress and the Presidency

Congress - Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance (page 35).

The Presidency - Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution (page 36).

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 (page 37).

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations (page 40).

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 (page 40).

Trade

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals (page 44).

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries (page 46).

Arms Control

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures (page 50).

Military Policy and Defense Spending

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs (page 52).

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest (page 55).

Natural Resources

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems (page 55).

Resource Management

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government (page 56).

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem with maximum protection of public health and the environment (page 58).

Air Quality - Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources (page 64).

Energy - Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources (page 64).

Land Use - Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship (page 64).

Water Resources - Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water (page 65).

Waste Management - Promote policies that reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes (page 65).

Nuclear Issues - Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment (page 66).

Public Participation

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources (page 68).

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 (page 70).

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 (page 70).

SOCIAL POLICY

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans (page 73).

Equality of Opportunity

Education, Employment and Housing - Support equal access to education, employment and housing (page 74).

Equal Rights - Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA (page 77).

Federal Role in Public Education

Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12 (page 81).

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 (page 82).

Federal Deficit - Promote responsible deficit policies (page 82).

Funding of Entitlements - Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance (page 82).

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, including behavioral health, and controls health care costs (page 85).

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 (page 89).

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families (page 90).

Income Assistance - Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter (page 90).

Support Services - Provide essential support services (page 90).

Housing Supply - Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family (page 91).

Child Care

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it (page 94).

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children (page 95).

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities (page 95).

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 (page 96).

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life (page 97).

Death Penalty

The LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty (page 98).

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 (page 99).

Human Trafficking

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking (page 99).

PRINCIPLES

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 (page 100).