



To: State LWV Presidents and Executive Directors
From: Advocacy and Litigation Department, LWVUS
Re: Setting 2020 Legislative Priorities

Dear State Presidents and Executive Directors:

Last November, LWVUS launched the inaugural legislative priorities guidance and survey to state and local Leagues inquiring into their legislative priorities and offering guidance around priorities to align under the *Making Democracy Work*® (MDW) campaign. We are happy to offer this guidance again this year as LWV's establish their legislative priorities for the 2020 legislative cycle.

Last year, LWVUS launched a first-of-its-kind survey with the intention learning more about the advocacy and litigation work LWV's were doing, gauge level of engagement around the MDW campaign, and to determine what tools and resources are needed in the field. Importantly, the report showed clear alignment around our core work of voting rights, improving elections, campaign finance and redistricting across the country. The survey results represented seventy-eight percent (78%) of the country and showed that the responsive 39 states (including D.C.) and 21 local Leagues, intended on working on at least 3 activities under the Making Democracy Work® campaign. States took on significant work under the campaign as well as advocating around regionally specific issues (i.e. climate change). With more intel from the field and regular conversations with Leagues, we assisted states in drafting and sending targeted action alerts during the legislative session and assisted states in establishing more robust tracking of legislation. LWVUS will also launch another survey regarding the legislative priorities that LWV's set for the 2020 legislative cycle.

This year, the legislative priority guidance emphasizes redistricting work, coinciding with the *People Powered Fair Maps Campaign* launched by LWVUS and in partnership with all state Leagues in the country (including the District of Columbia). With every state receiving a grant for this work, we know that each state will work on redistricting reform but not exclusively. Thus, we have also outlined reforms associated with Election Administration, Voter Protection, the Census, Money in Politics, and Constitutional Conventions that Leagues should also consider. Again, this year, we have created a survey for Leagues to use when reporting back on the lobbying activities that are planned. As we did last year, we will use this information to better understand the work happening at all levels of League. Specifically, the goal is to learn our overall organizational focus, your outreach efforts, and learn how LWVUS can best support the work in the field with tools and resources.

Redistricting

- **Reform redistricting systems:** Work with your legislature or through the citizen initiative process (if available in your state) to propose reforms that take the process of drawing maps out of the hands of politicians and work toward independent, fair, and nonpartisan map drawing processes.
- **Defend existing systems:** Protect the independent redistricting processes currently in place. Defend recent reforms that passed with voter support in recent and past elections.
- **Protect State Constitutions:** Provisions within state constitutions that promote free and fair elections and redistricting should be protected to ensure an avenue to protect maps through state courts. Leagues with

these provisions should monitor activity around these provisions and move to protect any challenges that would roll back this language.

- **Promote Legislative Fixes:** States that do not have an initiative process should look for ways to work with their legislatures to promote reform legislation in their states.

Note: States interested in working to address legislation at the federal level regarding this issue may work on this issue through the People Powered Fair Maps Campaign launched by LWVS in September 2019.

Census

- **Protect apportionment criteria:** Ensure that districts are drawn based on population. Oppose efforts that change apportionment based on citizens or voters.
- **Promote Census Participation:** The Census will begin on April 1, 2020. Leagues should work with their legislatures and local elected officials/leaders to promote education and participation in a full Census.

Election Administration Reforms

- **Voter Registration Reforms:** This list includes reforms that make it easier for voters to register and maintain their voter registration, including permanent and portable options.
- **Online voter registration:** Make online voter registration accessible to all. Allow voters to check their registration and update their information through a secure online portal.
- **Election day registration (Same day registration):** Allows voters to register or update their information on Election Day and cast a regular ballot.
- **Automatic voter registration:** Automatically register voters at state assistance agencies including the DMV unless they opt out. Reforms should also include safeguards that address the accidental registration of non-citizens (e.g. must be showing of intent) and ensure that protections are in place due to clerical errors.
- **Early voting and absentee voting:** Consider legislation or reforms that would expand early voting hours, especially weekend hours on the weekend before Election Day, and provide voters with the opportunity to request an absentee ballot.

Voter Protection

- **Voter ID:** Voters should not be required to show ID when voting.
- **Reject proof-of-citizenship requirements** in voter registration.
- **Voter List Maintenance/Voter Purges:** These processes should be done in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). List maintenance is necessary and important but should be done responsibly. Large scale voter purges without safeguards or an appropriate remedial mechanism often result in wrongful disenfranchisement and should be avoided.
- **Enhance Voting Security and Upgrade Equipment:** Advocate to replace outdated electronic voting equipment with new systems that are secure and accessible and can provide for an accurate, recountable, and transparent count.

Money in Politics

- **Disclosure:** Voters deserve to know who is trying to influence their vote. Leagues should be advocating for transparency with regards to funding of political campaigns, advertisements and expenditures.
- **Public financing systems:** Advocate for public financing systems that put value on small donors, not big donors or secret money, in our electoral process.



Constitutional Conventions

- There is [a movement in state legislatures](#) that calls for support of an Article V Constitutional Convention. LWVUS opposes the call for this convention and supports efforts to rescind previously passed resolutions. This is a very targeted effort with different opportunities based on your state. Contact Jessica Jones Capparell if you think there is a legislative threat or opportunity related to this issue.

LWVUS recognizes that there are many opportunities to defend voting rights, protect our democracy, and support pro-voter reforms in states across the country. We also understand how limited resources are in the field, and we want to offer more support to Leagues lobbying within the MDW and PPFM campaigns with a focus on issues that will impact our communities or have a negative impact on underrepresented communities. We encourage LWV's to use the updated list above to determine and focus what your League will concentrate on when your legislature convenes in January. And we look forward to learning about the priorities you set!

You can let us know which legislative priorities you're planning in 2020 legislative cycle by filling out our quick survey (*coming soon*)—which takes about 5 minutes to complete. Letting us know your legislative priorities will help us support your work as and help determine the tools and resources needed in the field.

We cannot thank you enough for all you do! Let's do this.

In League,

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