



State Positions

April 2020

Full text of current LWVAK State Positions, dates of initial adoption, revision or updates and reaffirmation. Text also available online at <http://www.lwvalaska.org/positions-bylaws/>.

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¹ Previously titled "Election Laws and Procedures", then, "Voter Registration & Participation"

² Previously titled "Land Use"

³ Previously titled "Day Care," then, "Child Care"

⁴ Previously titled "Domestic Violence", then, "Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse"

⁵ Previously titled "Juvenile Needs"

GOVERNMENT
1. CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska favors public disclosure of campaign contributions of money, goods, or services, as well as the disclosure of financial interests of public officials, both elected and appointed. All disclosure reports should be received, compiled and published by an independent commission, which should have final responsibility for monitoring and enforcement. The League also favors limitations on the length of political campaigns, the time allowed for fund raising, the amount of contributions and, notwithstanding the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the amount of expenditures.

The goals of a campaign system should be:

1. To ensure the public's right to know.
2. To combat corruption and undue influence.
3. To enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.
4. To promote citizen participation in the political process.

"To enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office" reflects two distinct concerns: First, that differences in candidates' personal wealth and other financial resources not be a necessary consideration in seeking public office; and, second, that insofar as possible there be an equalization of opportunity for challengers and incumbents.

AMPLIFICATION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska's position on campaign financing reflects our concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. The League believes that regulation of the length of campaigns and limitations on campaign contributions are necessary to increase participation in the democratic system. Campaign costs have skyrocketed, resulting in constant fund raising and driving candidates toward contributions from special interest. There is a growing perception of undue influence of special interest on officials and of unfair advantage for the incumbent.

In response, instead of the existing limit of \$1000 per year as set forth in AS 15.13, the League supports a limit on contributions to a candidate of \$1000 per election (e.g. \$1000 for a primary election and \$1000 for a general election) from any one source, except for political parties. And, further, the League supports movement toward public funding of campaigns.

GOVERNMENT
1. CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (PG.2)

DISCLOSURE

"Disclosure" means disclosure of contributions and expenditures in a timely manner before and after elections as set forth in AS 15.13, except for the filing of the 24-hour report as now required by Sec. 15.13.110(b). The law should be amended to close the existing two-day loophole for reporting contributions and expenditures in excess of \$250 within 24 hours. The League supports disclosure on the premise that voter participation in the governmental process depends on the public perception of the integrity of public servants.

LIMITATIONS

The League believes that limits on contributions and expenditures should be realistic and reasonable: high enough to be enforceable and to allow both for discussion of the issues and for visibility of the candidates. Limits should not be so low as to affect challengers adversely.

CONTRIBUTIONS

"Contributions" includes contributions of goods and services, such as space, personnel, telephone, mail, use of credit cards, etc., as well as money from any and all sources.

ENFORCEMENT

"An independent commission" refers to a commission to centralize reporting and overseeing of campaign contributions and expenditures of candidates, judges and groups, and to enforce the campaign disclosure law. Such a commission must be adequately funded and staffed, with powers to investigate, to subpoena and to initiate court action against violators. Strong penalties should be provided for violations.

BASE OF FUNDING

The League favors a system of individual contributions, political party contributions and public funding of campaigns that encourages maximum citizen participation and equitable competition among candidates. In the event an income tax is reinstated, the system should include the use of tax credits, tax deductions and income tax check-off for those who make individual contributions.

LENGTH OF CAMPAIGNS

The League believes that the length of campaigns should be shortened, for example, by limiting the time period between the time of filing and the general election. Campaigns should be long enough, however, to allow for discussion of the issues and adequate visibility of all candidates, especially challengers.

GOVERNMENT
1. CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE (PG.3)

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

Disclosure of financial interests of public officials, both elected and appointed, is a way of making known any possible conflict of interests. Disclosure reports should be received, compiled and published by an independent commission.

ADOPTED 1968; REVISED 1991; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

GOVERNMENT 2. CAPITAL BUDGET PROCESS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that prudent capital spending by the State of Alaska requires realistic budget preparation, clear project definition, use of standardized criteria for determination of need, and public involvement. In order to promote the judicious management of the capital budget process and capital projects, the League supports the following:

- * Establishment and implementation of consistently applied statutory criteria for defining and prioritizing all proposed capital projects;
- * Recognition and documentation of the effect of capital expenditures on the operating budgets and bonding capabilities of state and local governments;
- * Public understanding of and involvement in the capital budget preparation process;
- * Financial participation by local governments in the funding of requested capital projects;
- * Utilization of a single procedure for the proposal and evaluation of potential capital improvement projects; and
- * Accountability for the expenditures of capital funds in accordance with public and legislative intent.

Any spending limit should be in statutory, not constitutional, form and be based on the future availability of funding for the operation and maintenance of state-financed capital improvement projects.

AMPLIFICATION

Implicit in this position statement is the need for a clearly stated definition of the type of expenditure that qualifies for funding from the state's capital budget.

The definition of "capital improvement project" should not include a fixed dollar threshold.

All proposed capital improvement projects should:

- * Be submitted through appropriate executive branch agencies;
- * Be subjected to uniform criteria for evaluating the economics and program feasibility of that project;
- * Be included in a single appropriation bill, logically formatted, to clearly show the total capital budget commitment for that legislative session; and

GOVERNMENT
2. CAPITAL BUDGET PROCESS (PG.2)

- * Have publicly accessible and understandable documentation showing the total projected life-cycle costs, scope, need and local support for the project and how the project fits into the projected goals of the requesting agency or political subdivision.

The statutory criteria established for judging the merit of a proposed capital improvement project should apply at all levels of government and include:

- * That the project be for public, not private, purposes;
- * That the project have a high degree of public support as manifested through the public hearing process, and as verified by the commitment of the local governmental body to pay for a percentage (*e.g.* 10 percent) of the initial project costs (design, construction, and equipment) and to operate and maintain the project;
- * That the project be economically feasible, and so documented;
- * That the project be consistent with the stated goals over time (*e.g.* five years) of the requesting agency or entity;
- * That the project be the best solution to a state need;
- * That no (or inadequate) other money is available to fund the project;
- * That life, health, safety, and educational needs take priority over other less basic needs; and
- * That project funding not adversely affect the state or local government's future bonding capabilities.



ADOPTED 1985; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR AT LWVAK CONVENTION

GOVERNMENT
3. CONSTITUTION, AMENDING BY INITIATIVE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska opposes amending the Alaska Constitution by initiative.

AMPLIFICATION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes the Constitution establishes a broad theoretical framework under which government operates with checks and balances between the three branches of government (legislature, executive, judicial) and the people. The Constitution should not attempt to address the everyday problems of running government. Laws and regulations more appropriately address such issues. Alaskans currently have the power to enact laws via the statutory initiative process. Written in the mid 1950s, the Alaska Constitution is one of the newest state constitutions, and it is considered a model document that has served the state well through the years.

IN THE ALTERNATIVE

1. The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that, should amending the Alaska Constitution by the initiative process be allowed in the future, the following restrictions should apply.
 - a. Each such proposed constitutional amendment by initiative placed before the voters should require a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the qualified voters voting on the question.
 - b. The Constitutional initiative process should not be used to amend the Alaska Bill of Rights, dedicate revenues, make or repeal appropriations, create courts, define the jurisdiction of courts or prescribe their rules, or enact local or special legislation.
2. The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that any initiative petition for amending the Alaska Constitution should contain the following restrictions and/or information:
 - a. Require not less than five hundred (500) qualified voters from two-thirds (2/3) of the election districts as sponsors to the prospective petition submitted to the lieutenant governor's office.
 - b. Require valid signatures of not less than fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of votes cast in the preceding general election.
 - c. Require petition signatures be gathered from at least two-thirds (2/3) of the election districts in the state in order to reflect statewide interest in a measure.
 - d. Limit the time for collecting signatures to one year.

GOVERNMENT
3. CONSTITUTION, AMENDING BY INITIATIVE (PG. 2)

- e. Require an attorney general advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot. Such opinion should be published in the State of Alaska Official Election Pamphlet.
- f. An Alaska Constitutional initiative petition must be confined to one subject and the subject of the proposed initiative must be expressed in the title.
- g. If the signature gatherers are paid, the following must be disclosed on each Constitutional initiative petition and must be published in the State of Alaska Official Election Pamphlet: (1) the person or group paying the gatherers and (2) the basis of payment, such as by signature or by the hour.



ADOPTED 1998; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

GOVERNMENT
4. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that a constitutional convention should not be held at this time.

AMPLIFICATION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports these objectives of a state constitution:

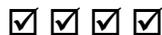
- * It should provide a framework for statutory law.
- * It should be flexible, concise, and adaptable to changing needs.
- * It should provide for the establishment of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and establish the basic function of each with checks and balances among them.
- * It should provide for the protection of group and individual rights.

The League finds the present Alaska State Constitution meets these objectives.

The League finds that although there are criticisms of government in Alaska, the problems are not with the constitutional provisions, but with the implementation of these provisions.

The Constitution requires a vote every 10 years on a constitutional convention. The League believes this provides a valuable educational opportunity. It requires the electorate to take a serious look at the Constitution and affords an opportunity for adequate review of the effectiveness and responsiveness of the document and our state government.

The League of Women Voters believes that a constitutional convention should not be held at this time. While certain issues prompt intense public interest, the League does not believe that altering the basic framework of government is the best way to address these issues. The League of Women Voters supports reliance on the amendment process for any needed change between now and the next constitutional convention referendum.



ADOPTED 1982; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

GOVERNMENT

5. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that the Alaska legislative system should be responsive, representative, accessible, efficient, and accountable. We feel that the legislative structure, which would best accomplish this goal, contains the following elements.

- * Measures to facilitate the budgetary process;
- * Clearly delineated procedures for legislative committee action and treatment of legislation during all states of the process.
- * Conference committee and free conference committee deliberations that are open, judicious, germane and subject to public notice.
- * Caucus should be open with exception of circumstances involving prejudicial and personnel matters.
- * Procedures followed which maximize consolidation of effort between the two houses of the Legislature.
- * Easy availability to information for the public concerning legislative activities and ease of access for public participation in the legislative process.
- * Procedures that enhance operational effectiveness including clear enforcement of rules.

AMPLIFICATION

BUDGET AND LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT

- * The legislature should conduct a study to look into the matter of biennial budgeting and its specific applicability to Alaska.
- * The use of joint finance committee meetings, at least for the purpose of holding hearings, should be strongly encouraged.

BILL PROCEDURES AND UNIFORM RULES

- During the first weeks of a session, a minimum of floor sessions should be held, with most of the time allocated for committee meetings.
- Bill assignments should be made only to committees responsible for the subject matter.
- * Bills "by committee by request" should require the written approval of a majority of the committee concerned before they may be introduced.

GOVERNMENT
5. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND PROCEDURES (PG.2)

- * The Rules should require committees to report, by a time certain, one way or another on all bills referred to them.
- * A statement of purpose or other concise, written explanation should be required for all bills and joint resolutions with a letter of transmittal attached.
- * The prohibition of amending one bill onto another (piggybacking) should be maintained unless approval is obtained from a majority of the members of the committee that has or has had jurisdiction over the "carrier" bill. Some tracking mechanism should be devised whereby bills that have become amendments to other bills are indicated as such.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

- * Conference committees and free conference committees should be subject to public notice requirements, and their meetings should be open to the public.
- * Free conference committees should be restricted in the kinds of changes they may make in the bill under consideration; any such changes must be germane to the question.
- * A waiting period should be required between the time a free conference committee or conference committee makes available its written report and the time the floor vote is taken.

STRUCTURE

- * The Alaska Legislature should attempt, through Rules changes and other means, to improve the operation of its bicameral structure. Such methods might include more judicious use of joint interim committees and holding joint standing committee hearings.

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PARTICIPATION

- * Advance notice of committee hearings should be formally required and a standardized manner prescribed in the Rules for posting such notice.
- * A coordinated and well-publicized statewide distribution of hearing schedules via the media and the Legislative Affairs Agency be maintained.
- * A toll-free telephone service should be instituted, emphasizing that all committee meetings are open to the public.
- * Formal committee rules should be adopted, and all committees should be required to follow the same procedures. Enforcement procedures should be included and House and Senate leaders held accountable for their adherence.
- * Mason's Rules for Legislative Procedures should be followed.

GOVERNMENT
5. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND PROCEDURES (PG.3)

- * Record keeping methods should be standardized and records should be readily available to the public.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

- * Orientation of new legislators should provide for information from legislators leaving office.
- * More controls should be placed on the creation, funding and evaluation of interim committees during the second session of the legislature.
- * House and Senate standing committees should be encouraged to meet jointly.
- * The standing committee jurisdiction set forth in the Rules should be reviewed periodically and changes made when necessary.
- * Committees should represent the proportion of majority/minority members as required in Rules.



ADOPTED?; REVISED 1993; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

GOVERNMENT
6. ALASKA'S STATUTORY INITIATIVE PROCESS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports the existing initiative process and makes the following recommendations:

- Initiatives should be voted on only at General Elections, not special or primary elections.
- Support change that requires simplicity and clarity of the wording of initiative questions with a “yes” vote to indicate in favor of the measure and a “no” vote to indicate opposition to the measure.
- Support disclosure on each initiative petition of the name(s) or group(s) that is paying the gatherer and how they are paid, such as by signature or by the hour.
- Support the requirement for not less than 500 qualified voters as sponsors to the prospective petition with the Lieutenant Governor's office.
- Support the requirement for a number of valid signatures not less than ten (10%) percent of the total number of the votes cast in the preceding general elections.
- Support a formula for at least 50 signatures in each of two-thirds of the legislative districts in order to reflect statewide interest in a measure.
- Support the requirement an attorney general advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot, such opinion to be published in the State Election Pamphlet.
- Support the existing limit on time for collecting signatures to one year.
- Support the requirement for a cost analysis to be on each initiative petition.
- Support the requirement that signature gatherers be qualified voters of Alaska.



ADOPTED 2001 AT POST-CONVENTION BOARD MEETING; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR
SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION

GOVERNMENT
7. VOTER REGISTRATION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that an equitable voter registration system should encourage maximum interest and participation in the electoral process, be simple and efficient to administer, and should aid in preventing fraudulent voting practices. To achieve these objectives, the League supports:

- Voter identification which does not inhibit voter access to the electoral process;
- Mandatory training of election officials;
- Comprehensive registration information available online; and
- Outreach to all eligible residents including newly naturalized citizens and students.

The League believes that a statewide registration system should reflect the above objectives and should:

- Provide for permanent and portable registration with the ability to change registration information online;
- Make registration easily accessible (e.g. through the Division of Motor Vehicles);
- Allow registration in person and by mail as well as through electronic means;
- Provide a system of preregistration for 16-17 year olds;
- Permit same day registration for voting on election day; and
- Provide for routine purging of registration rolls.



ADOPTED 1968; UPDATED 2014; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK
CONVENTION

NATURAL RESOURCES - 8. ENERGY

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) favors the wise use and development of a variety of energy sources to ensure a sustainable long-term cultural, environmental, and economic future for Alaska, and for all Alaskans.

LWVAK supports energy development and use that protects the health and safety of people and the environment, and which includes an open and inclusive permitting process. The precautionary principle should be applied when developing public policies and regulations, and when evaluating energy sources and projects for Alaska's unique communities and regions.

Energy conservation and efficiency should be maximized through use of public education, energy research and the development of new energy technologies. We support improving energy efficiency in existing homes, and commercial and public buildings through weatherization and other public and private incentive programs. We support ongoing revision of State and local uniform building codes to increase energy efficiency standards for new construction.

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports development and installation of renewable-source energy systems, such as solar, wind, tidal, hydro, and geothermal. We encourage long-term public and private planning and investment that reduces the life cycle cost of energy systems. We give priority to community and State decisions that lead to the use of energy systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We support increasing transportation fuel efficiency standards, and the development or expansion of energy efficient public transportation options. We recognize the value of some smaller, community or regional energy projects that may take less time and funding to develop and may also be less vulnerable to disasters.

LWVAK supports delaying use or expansion of technologies for which there remain serious disparities between the promised performance and the actual safety and environmental impact record. We urge caution when there is potential for pervasive, profound, or long-lived consequences or irreparable harm to water, air, or food (fish and agriculture).

- We oppose development and use of nuclear energy until secure options exist for plant management, and toxic waste transport, processing and disposal
- Where other alternatives are reasonably available, we do not support the use of coal. Where coal is used, ongoing monitoring of emissions and upgrading of technology should be carried out to reduce impacts on humans and the environment.
- LWVAK will need evidence that surface and ground water quality will be unaffected, before supporting hydraulic fracturing for gas and oil recovery.
- LWVAK supports the development of clean technologies to use biomass as an energy source, provided that the use of each biomass source has been proven by long-term studies to not degrade air quality or the environment.

ADOPTED 1978; REVISED 1991; 2013; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION

NATURAL RESOURCES

9. LAND DISPOSAL

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska feels the purpose of the State land disposal program should be to dispose of land within specific parameters. Disposal programs should allow for a variety of land uses maintaining program continuity from year to year including adequate administration and enforcement costs in land prices. Continued emphasis should be placed upon requiring land inventories, comprehensive land use plans, and public involvement. League members believe that a fair exchange value is an important aspect of State land pricing policy with investment returns from State lands going primarily to State or municipal governments.

AMPLIFICATION

The purpose of the State land disposal program should be to:

- Regulate patterns of growth and development;
- Retain certain land for public uses;
- Consider the requirement of future generations;
- Provide a mixed balance between public and private uses;
- Consider the integrity of the land itself and reserve the unique features for appropriate uses and use appropriate disposal methods;
- Encourage the use of land by sale, permit, or lease;
- Get land into private ownership;
- Develop land for home sites.

All land disposal programs must require a land inventory and a comprehensive land use plan which includes coordination and compliance with State and local land use plans, subdivision requirements, and where necessary, protection of the right to access. Public involvement is essential in the selection of land to be disposed of, types of uses to be allowed on the land, and methods of disposal. It is essential that some program continuity be maintained from year to year, allowing for revision when necessary, and enabling people to know in advance when and what land will be offered for sale.

NATURAL RESOURCES
9. LAND DISPOSAL (PG.2)

Methods of disposal favored by the League of Women Voters of Alaska include:

- Varied lot sizes;
- Agricultural sales;
- Favorable State financing;
- Comprehensive leasing program;
- Permit process;
- Sale by auction and lottery;
- Remote parcel;
- Land discounts;
- State low interest loan fund for land development.

Of lesser importance is the allowance of preference rights, primarily that of residency if constitutional, again monitoring to prevent abuse.

All disposal programs should include adequate administrative and enforcement costs.

A priority in State land pricing policy should allow a fair exchange value by selling land for the appraised value. Providing relatively low-cost lands to the State's citizens is also important. The principles of asset management should be followed (*e.g.*, selling land at frequent and predictable intervals to maintain surrounding land values). Investment return should go to State or municipal governments.



ADOPTED 1980; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

NATURAL RESOURCES 10. LAND USE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports good land use planning; the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of comprehensive plans (including regional plans) for the use of all lands in the State of Alaska; the ensuring of coordination and cooperation among state, federal, municipal, and private land owners; and placement of responsibility for making and enforcing land use decisions on the lowest level of government immediately concerned with the land in question.

AMPLIFICATION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes the essential elements of comprehensive land planning should:

- * Include citizen participation, education, communication, and on-going evaluation;
- * Provide the public with alternatives and with possible consequences of their choices;
- * Compile and catalog resources inventories to aid in land use decisions and to be available to all citizens when preparing impact statements, appeals, and testimonies;
- * Identify and plan for areas of critical concern to the State and for areas where land use decisions have statewide impact;
- * Research and establish innovative resource management systems and cooperative uses of the land;
- * Evaluate social, environmental, and economic impact prior to any major public or private development or disposal;
- * Formulate land policy to ensure optimum use of the land after considering environmental, social, and economic interests as well as all available information concerning each area.



ADOPTED 1975; REVISED 1979, 1985; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK
CONVENTION.

SOCIAL POLICY
11. CAREER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The Alaska State League of Women Voters believes that the combination of home and school prepares students for competence in the world of work. The League recognizes the importance of parental advocacy and/or adult mentorship in the career preparation process. The majority of people receive no schooling or training, other than on the job, beyond high school. Therefore, we believe that our schools have the responsibility to graduate students who exhibit job readiness, positive work attitudes, and cooperation skills that will enable them to find and hold employment.

The League believes that the Alaskan schools should offer equal opportunities and respect to ALL students: those who will have post-secondary schooling and those who will immediately go into the work force. To meet this goal, the basic curricula should include problem-solving skills, interpersonal communications and tolerance skills, as well as provide opportunities to explore careers and offer courses containing specific technical training and career experience. Academic skills needed for success in today's entry-level careers should be integrated into career preparation experience.

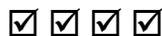
AMPLIFICATION

In order to strengthen career education programs, the League makes the following recommendations:

- A career development specialist should be designated within each Alaskan school district administration to coordinate career education, vocational/technical programs, and outreach work in the community.
- Occupational training classes should be introduced in the middle/junior high schools, so that all students entering ninth grade will already have met certain prerequisites. (For example, basic computer literacy should be demonstrated.)
- All high schools should offer well-defined programs and courses that provide the opportunity to explore careers, rather than achieve mastery. (Programs that provide entry-level skills should be available in the community for those students who desire specific occupational training.)
- The League recognizes that purchasing and maintaining equipment that will provide state-of-the-art technical training is expensive. However, in order to meet the needs of all students, we find this a reasonable cost of providing a complete education.
- Adequate funding must be secured to provide relevant, well-defined career preparation programs.
- Efforts should be made to change the image of vocational education.

SOCIAL POLICY
11. CAREER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS (PG. 2)

- "Career Preparation or Education" or "Occupational Education" or "Job Readiness" or "Technical Preparation" are suggestions for replacing the term "Vocational Education."
- State exposure to technical training and/or community service at an earlier age.
- Raise the academic standards of vocational/technical classes and allow cross-crediting (which allows a career preparation class or job-partnership experience to be credited in place of another academic requirement.)
- Career Counseling efforts should be expanded.
 - ALL middle/junior-high and high school students should have access to career counseling.
 - Encourage the use of adult and high school volunteers for class scheduling and counseling assistance. Also, utilize computers and other relevant tools to decrease administrative and scheduling workloads, so that counselors can concentrate more on career counseling.
 - At least one individual at each high school should be designated a "career counselor."
 - Career preference and/or aptitude tests should be available at each student's option, as long as results are not used to "track" or otherwise direct student away from any avenue of interest to him/her. Career exploration experiences are not a fixed or lock-in path, and any one job experience can – and often does – lead to additional interests.



ADOPTED 1994; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

SOCIAL POLICY
12. CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that children’s early years are some of their most important learning years. For many children, these years are spent in a combination of childcare and/or preschool settings. Funding early childhood care and education is an investment in the social and economic health of our children, communities and state; an investment that brings substantial current and future returns. Accessible, quality early childhood care and education benefits all levels of society. The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports state and local policies, legislation and programs committed to the following principles: (1) All children are entitled to safe, nurturing care. (2) Caring for children is a societal as well as a family responsibility. (3) Quality childcare that is responsive to the diverse needs of children and their families should be available to all socio-economic groups on an ability to pay basis. (4) Job protected, paid parental leave is highly desirable and stable funding is a necessary component of a healthy policy,

AMPLIFICATION

ADMINISTRATIVE/LOCAL SUPPORT

Support a state administrative structure which provides for optimum effectiveness in implementing childcare policies, program, and services by meeting the following criteria and understandings:

- a. The welfare of the child is the primary focus;
- b. Policy is effectively implemented;
- c. Private and public programs are efficiently coordinated;
- d. The administrative staff had ongoing training in child development;
- e. Responsible agencies are effective advocates for child care and are responsive to public concerns.

QUALITY

Support state responsibility to ensure the delivery of quality care. Support measures that:

- a. Establish and maintain quality standards for all forms of early childhood education and care;
- b. Encourage and assist all early childcare providers to maintain and provide safe, enriching quality child care and learning;
- c. Provide incentives for family child care homes to become licensed;

SOCIAL POLICY

12. CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (PG. 2)

- d. Provide effective monitoring of child care programs that are regularly evaluated;
- e. Support and facilitate increased wages and benefits for early childhood educators;
- f. Ensure that families have access to information that will help them to recognize and choose quality care.

AFFORDABILITY

- a. Encourage state responsibility to follow these actions:
- b. Meet the needs for subsidized child care to all socioeconomic groups through reliable and diverse sources of state funding;
- c. Use various incentives to encourage businesses to offer child care services and benefits to their employees;
- d. Promote and seek federal assistance for child care;
- e. Provide regular review of statutory
- f. Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for all state funded child care programs and services;
- g. Strengthen the Resource and Referral (R&R) agencies' role in recruiting and supporting quality, affordable child care.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Support diverse community efforts, where appropriate, to meet identified local need for child care services. Support measures that:

- a. Provide incentives for private providers through such means as subsidies, fee waivers, and simplification of regulatory process;
- b. Include child care elements in community development plans;
- c. Commit the use of public lands and facilities for child care programs.



ADOPTED 1976; REVISED 1986; AMENDED 2001; REVISED 2018

SOCIAL POLICY

13. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND BULLYING

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes all individuals have the right to live in a fear-free environment, and to be safe from sexual assault (SA); physical abuse; neglect and psychological and emotional abuse including bullying and stalking. In addition, a special degree of protection is needed for vulnerable, dependent people of any age.

Intervention by public agencies should take place when there is evidence of sexual assault or of physical, psychological or emotional abuse (including stalking and bullying) of one family member by another or one partner by another (including dating partnerships), or by peers. Care must be taken when reporting abuse as this may actually increase danger for victims/survivors. When necessary to separate family members, it is preferable to remove the perpetrator rather than the victim from the home, particularly if the victim is a child. Physical or sexual assault should be prosecuted whether or not the victim presses charges.

Federal, state and local governments should share responsibility for the health and safety of family members, with primary responsibility at state and local levels. Adequate funding is necessary for the care and protection of the spouse (including ex-spouse, partner, etc.) and children victimized by violence; and costs must be shared by all levels of government, private charitable contributions, and a special fund into which perpetrators are required to pay. To the maximum extent possible, perpetrators should be held financially responsible for these costs, and no victim should ever be required to pay any costs associated with a domestic violence (DV) or sexual assault incident.

Domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault require a coordinated response by law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, social service/victim agencies, and the medical community. All people who work with domestic violence and sexual assault incidents must receive special training specific to working with victims, including trauma and its effects. Such training should address cultural sensitivity and an awareness of potential inherent bias on the part of those who work within a diverse community. Training can be provided by experts in the field such as those at local DV/SA agencies. This training should be customized to the area of practice of the service providers and include basic training for new hires and periodic follow-up training for all those who work with victims.

AMPLIFICATION

The following areas should be addressed in any comprehensive program concerning domestic violence and sexual assault.

SOCIAL POLICY

13. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND BULLYING (PG. 2)

PREVENTION:

1. Focused and directed preventive programs for domestic, sexual, emotional, physical and economic abuse of any person (women, children, men) must be developed throughout statewide agencies and services. These programs must be multi-faceted, comprehensive, culturally relevant, and include an awareness of bullying and stalking.
2. Preventive education should begin early in schools, using age-appropriate, skill-based curriculum, on the issues of: human rights, domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, anger, power, and control issues, including: conflict resolution, safety training, problem identification, and available assistance and bullying and stalking. Evidence-based healthy relationship and dating violence prevention should be introduced into every middle and high school. Social-emotional curricula can be used in the earlier grades.

PUBLIC SERVICES TO VICTIMS:

1. Public services should be available to all victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, regardless of the person's ability to pay.
2. Responsible, knowledgeable, and informed policy, intervention, and protection should be in place and available.
3. Shelter for victims and their dependents is essential.
4. When appropriate, a sufficient number of certified sexual assault nurse examiners must be available.
5. A sufficient number of social workers, trained in all aspects of DV/SA, must be available as well as foster care, in needed.
6. Adequate counseling and advocacy support for victims and other affected family members, as appropriate, should be provided.
7. Trauma-informed medical care, including mental health care, must be provided.
8. Access for victims to representation for divorce/separation, custody, child support, child custody, protective orders, and debt/property division issues that arise as a consequence of the abuse must be available. This should include recognition of Alaska's rebuttable presumption that a parent who has a "history of perpetrating domestic violence" (as stated in HB385 2004) against another parent should not be awarded sole or joint legal or primary or shared physical custody, based on the tremendous impact domestic violence has on children.
9. Alcohol and drug abuse treatment for all age groups, including teens, should be available.
10. All pertinent agencies should offer coordinated, trauma-informed social services.
11. Routine screening should be done in all health-care and social service settings, followed by informational outreach when indicated.

SOCIAL POLICY

13. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND BULLYING (PG. 3)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFENDERS:

1. Batterer's accountability programming for all offenders should be required.
2. Rehabilitation and batterer's accountability programming for incarcerated offenders should be required.
3. When appropriate, alternatives to incarceration should be used that include batter's accountability programming.
4. Alternative housing for perpetrators should be arranged, when appropriate.
5. Research records on the effectiveness of batter's accountability programs should be compiled and made public.

Special attention must be paid to groups who have been inadequately served in the past, such as adolescents, people who experience disabilities, and the elderly.

DEFINITIONS:

"Bullying" refers to unwanted aggressive, intentional behavior among peers that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time, and may take the form of cyberbullying or cyberstalking.

"Cyberbullying/Cyberstalking" refers to actions against a victim that willfully and repeatedly harass, threaten, shame, or follow/stalk a victim through the use of electronic means including personal websites, blogs, email, text, social media, chat rooms, message boards, instant messaging, photography, video games, tracking devices like mSpy, and hacking of a victim's electronic accounts.

"Domestic Violence" means physical, psychological or emotional harm, including stalking or the threat of physical, psychological or emotional harm between and among household or family members.

"History of perpetrating domestic violence" includes one incident of violence that causes serious physical injury or more than one incident of domestic violence. If one parent has a "history of perpetrating domestic violence", then the offending parent must show that he or she has successfully completed a batter's intervention program, that he or she does not engage in substance abuse, that he or she is in compliance with appropriate gun control laws, and that the best interest of the child require his or her participation as a custodial parent because the victimized parent is absent, has a mental illness or has a substance abuse problem that affects parenting abilities. (In the matter of substance abuse and/or mental illness, care must be taken to determine if the substance abuse or mental illness is a result of the abusive relationship. It should be note that frequently abusers claim that their partners are mentally ill or addicted.) If the abusive parent cannot prove this, he or she is generally permitted only supervised visitation.

SOCIAL POLICY

13. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND BULLYING (PG. 4)

“Household or family members” include spouses or former spouses, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, foster parents and children, members of a social unit comprised of those living together in the same dwelling, or persons in a dating, courtship, or engagement relationship.

“Physical, psychological or emotional harm” includes abuse, neglect, stalking and sexual assault including bullying and stalking as well as their cyber forms.

“Peers” refer to those of similar age to a victim such as classmates.

“Sexual assault” means engaging in sexual contact without consent or in violation of law, as provided in Alaska Statutes 11.41.410-460. This includes sexual contact with someone under the age of consent even though contact is consensual or with a person who is incapacitated or incapable of consenting. It is also a crime to attempt sexual contact without consent. Sexual offenses often include the use of physical force, verbal or emotional threats, intimidation, coercion, and manipulation.

Spyware/Tracking Software” is a form of electronic stalking that allows the user to track via computer a victim’s location through the victim’s smartphone, tablet , or computer.

“Stalking” means repeated acts of nonconsensual contact, including approaching a victim in a public place, appearing at the victim’s workplace, entering a victim’s property, and contacting the victim by phone and/or electronic means. Alaska Statues 11.41.270.

“Sexual harassment” reflects certain entitlement beliefs and attitudes linked to domestic violence and sexual assault. Given that connection, the formal definition of sexual harassment is included here: “Sexual harassment includes all of the following: Verbal assaults such as whistles, jokes, comments, and insults about gender, sexuality, or sexual activity; visual assaults such as exposing oneself or exposing someone to nude or pornographic images against someone’s wishes, or gesturing or mimicking sexual acts; and physical assaults such as intimidating behaviors and postures or unwanted physical touching such as tickling or wrestling.



ADOPTED 1986; REVISED 1995; 2010, 2018. REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION.

SOCIAL POLICY
14. YOUTH & ADOLESCENT NEEDS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports comprehensive policies and services for youth in order to maximize their participation in citizenry and democracy. Services should be coordinated among all public and private agencies concerned with homelessness, education, vocational advancement, inter-personal relationships, mental and physical health, family stability, and peer empowerment.

Identified prevention-oriented goals are:

- Support of family cohesiveness
- Support for victims of abuse, neglect and sexual assault
- Support of high school graduation and vocational education for youth
- Education of youth to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections
- Education of youth concerning drug and alcohol abuse
- Support of runaway and “throw away” youth and their needs
- Education of youth concerning suicide
- Education of youth concerning criminal acts and consequences of those acts

AMPLIFICATION

The 1971 study and the last updated League of Women Voters of Alaska study of 1988 demonstrated a need for coordination among agencies that provide services to families and youth. The studies demonstrated a need for improved communication, sharing of data, confidentiality, and inter-agency respect.

PRO ACTIVE PREVENTION OF THE PROBLEMS FOR YOUTH IS A TOP PRIORITY AND
SHOULD INCLUDE:

- The education of youth who are parents
- The education of the parents of youth
- Family communication that fosters family decision making in traditional family settings and foster homes

SOCIAL POLICY
14. YOUTH & ADOLESCENT NEEDS (PG. 2)

- The education of youth concerning self-respect
- The need for completion of education
- Education of youth concerning the consequences of alcohol and drug use abuse
- Education of youth concerning sexuality, reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS
- Attention to and guidance to youth regarding family violence, rape, sexual assault, harassment, gender roles and sexual stereotyping
- Education and support of youth concerning grief, loss and hopelessness as a result of a death of loved ones
- Establishment of a medical resource “medical home” for adolescents including runaway homeless youth
- Education of youth concerning the diverse cultural values of Alaska’s peoples

PREVENTION EDUCATION SHOULD INCLUDE A COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CURRICULUM
FOR ALL STUDENTS (K-12).

Among the needs identified throughout Alaska, the League determined that:

- All youth need family life education, encouragement for their own future, information about personal responsibility, and parenting skills. These can be provided within families, schools, community organizations, and religious institutions.
- Quality child care should be available for teen parents to foster and encourage their continuing education and skill development.
- Adolescent resident treatment center for alcohol and substance abuses are needed in all major population centers in Alaska.
- Group homes and shelters should be available to meet the needs of youth who cannot live at home.
- Foster parent programs should be developed, especially in smaller communities, that will train and support foster parents.
- Adequate nursing and counseling staff should be mandatory for elementary and secondary school. Basic in-service training in adolescent physical and mental health needs is an imperative element of prevention.

SOCIAL POLICY
14. YOUTH & ADOLESCENT NEEDS (PG. 3)

- Positive and pro-active places and programs need to be available for recreation, work, study, and use of free time.
- Public and private policies need to be established so that school hours permit young people a minimum of unsupervised time. This can include job sharing for parents, flexible working schedules for parents, and quality latchkey programs.
- Passage, funding, and implementation of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in an acceptable on-going opt-out mode needs to be in place so that meaningful data can be collected for program planning.
- Funding of local and state agencies responsible for services to youth must be adequate.
- Development of programs for adolescents to explore and articulate their needs to move to adulthood and positive citizenry in our society.
- Wide availability of contraception and the accompanying responsibilities should be made available to adolescents.



ADOPTED 1971; REVISED 1988; REVISED 2011; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT
LWVAK CONVENTION

SOCIAL POLICY
15. LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origins, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. In addition, League members agree that work to promote fair housing and an adequate supply of housing for low-income families must proceed hand in hand. One of our goals in the work of promoting fair housing is Tenant's Rights. A uniform landlord-tenant act which specifies tenants' rights, and both landlord and tenant obligations in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling is important in achieving this goal.

AMPLIFICATION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska will support landlord-tenant legislation that clarifies and strengthens these points:

- * Specification of landlord's obligation in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling;
- * Specification of tenant's obligation in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling;
- * Protection from unfair eviction – tenant should not be evicted for reporting code violation;
- * Protection from exorbitant rent increases as a result of code compliance;
- * Provision for inspect of units for possible violation;
- * Provision for right to withhold rent if landlord refuses to repair faults that were not caused by tenant – rent monies may be paid into an escrow account until landlord makes needed repairs;
- * Specification of the amount a landlord may collect as a security deposit;
- * Specification that security deposit is held in a manner that ensures its availability to tenant within a reasonable time after tenancy terminates;
- * Specification that landlord must itemize in writing any deduction taken from the security deposit;
- * Provision for subletting by tenant subject to landlord's approval;
- * Provision for reasonable notice to terminate a month-to-month tenancy;
- * Provision in the event of a tenant's extended absence;

SOCIAL POLICY
15. LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONSHIPS (PG. 2)

- * Provision for a tenant's abandonment of the rented property;
- * Provision for a lease termination by tenant due to events beyond the tenant's control, such as illness, military deployment, care-taking of family member, or unexpected job transfer, and other unforeseen events;
- * An agent with power to act on the landlord's behalf should be required in the case of an absentee or out-of-state landlord.

In the enforcement of fair housing laws, speedy resolution should be insured. Mediation and legal redress should be readily available. Avenues for mediation and legal redress should be widely publicized and readily accessible. Adequate funding should be available for public education to inform citizens of the provisions of the legislation, of their fair housing rights, and of procedures to be followed in securing them.



ADOPTED 1974; REVISED 1994; UPDATED 2020; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT
LWVAK CONVENTION

SOCIAL POLICY

16. SCHOOL FINANCE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) recognizes, based on the Alaska State Constitution, that the State has the major responsibility for financing schools in Alaska, including grades PreK--12. However, local school districts in organized and unorganized boroughs should be required to contribute a percentage of the financial support and should have the major responsibility for decision making in the expenditure of funds. Public monies for education should NOT support student vouchers or Educational Savings Accounts (ESA's) that are allocated to private or for-profit schools; nor should public education funding be allocated to for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMO's).

AMPLIFICATION

FINANCING

The League of Women Voters of Alaska recognizes that the State has the major responsibility for financing public education, including grades Pre-K through 12, in Alaska because State funding is an equitable method and meets the constitutional requirement that the State provide an educational system for its residents; and because the State has the ability to derive income from wider sources than a local unit of government. Budgeting for public education should be a top priority item in the Alaska State Budget. The League also recognizes that local monetary involvement helps insure local interest and accountability; therefore, local districts in organized boroughs and regional educational attendance areas (REAA) in the unorganized borough should be required to contribute a minimum (5-10%) of the funding for basic need (as defined for the delivery of "basic" education program and related services). Local funding beyond a set minimum should be permitted.

METHOD OF FINANCING

The League believes that the allotment and distribution of funds for elementary and secondary schools should be based upon equity, adequacy, and fairness. Inherent in this distribution plan should be a clear and concise definition of "basic need," which should be stated in monetary terms and be clearly understandable. State budgeting for public schools should include forward funding so that school districts can plan a year in advance; such planning allows for stability and programming that can increase the effectiveness of public school education.

USE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING

Public education funds must be used to fund public education for all children. The use of public education money should be determined by locally elected school boards with input from local administration, staff/faculty, and parents. Local school boards may choose to establish public charter schools, whose student roster reflects the population diversity of the local community, and

SOCIAL POLICY
16. SCHOOL FINANCE (PG. 2)

base their educational approaches on best education practices shown to meet the needs of a diverse population and foster student growth in the basic areas of learning. However, public charter schools must be financed in a way that does not weaken the traditional public school; this familiarity with the local school budget and local educational needs is the reason why the League supports the local school board as the primary authority in the authorization of a public charter school. Assessment measures of student growth should be identical across a given school district, and public charter schools that do not show adequate student academic growth should have public funding discontinued. Public monies for education should not support student vouchers or Education Savings Accounts (ESA's) that are allocated to private or for-profit schools. In addition, school districts should not use public education funding toward for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMO's), companies that run a number of schools for profit.

FUNDING OF CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

The League believes that the State has the major responsibility for financing the construction, operation, and maintenance of educational facilities, with local districts required to contribute a percentage of the funding. The State would meet its responsibility through a separate formula funding mechanism. Local school districts have the major responsibility for making the decisions in regard to design, location, needs, type of structure, and equipment. In order to qualify for State construction funds, local school districts should be required to contain the size of their buildings to conform to space guidelines mandated by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED).

CLARIFICATION OF BASIC NEED

Basic need shall include all of the costs associated with the delivery of the educational program required by statute, regulation, or other standard requirements. Assumed under this is a fair and equitable determination of real cost indices by community for facilities, staff, texts and materials, library, music, art, physical education facilities, etc. It is also assumed that the basic costs will be modified by geographical area differentials across the State. It is understood that districts qualifying for federal funding would be allocated their full entitlement - separate from the basic need definition.

SUPPORTING DEFINITIONS:

Some of these definitions have a fluid nature in that they may be used to mean different things depending upon what entity is using them; educational and charter management organizations are two examples.

1. Public Schools: These schools represent the majority of educational offerings for pre-college youth. They are supported by public taxes and other sources of public funding and are accountable to local school boards and state education departments. They are non-profit and fall under three basic categories: traditional, charter, and alternative.

SOCIAL POLICY
16. SCHOOL FINANCE (PG. 3)

a. Traditional public schools serve the majority of public school students and are non-charter by nature.

b. Charter schools are public schools of choice that are supported by public funds. Charters were originally meant to allow for innovation in educational methods; those successful innovations could be applied to the broader public school system. Charter schools in Alaska must present a proposal to the local school board, receive school board approval, and meet all requirements set by the school board and the state department of education.

c. Alternative schools are also publicly funded; these schools are frequently established by the school board rather than a group of parents to meet particular needs of school-aged children. Students may select an alternative school or may be counseled into such an option. (There also exist many private alternative schools which may charge tuition; some of these schools may focus on certain types of learning disabilities such as ADHD or autism. Public school districts may assist students needing this specialized approach with tuition aid. Such expenditures are under the control of local school boards and school administrations or may be provided by state departments of education.)

2. Private Schools may be either religious or non-religious in nature, may charge tuition to cover costs, and may be nonprofit or for-profit schools. They do not have to meet public educational criteria for teaching materials, class, size, inclusion and diversity, or teacher certification. Some may be referred to as charter schools, but they are not held accountable by local school districts and in most states are not supported by public money. However, some states have instituted a variety of ways to shift public funding to private schools; vouchers and educational savings accounts are two of those methods.

a. Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs) are voucher-like accounts accessed via debit card that allot public education funding to parents so that they may select their own educational plan and materials. They are gaining popularity, with several states already implementing them. Do not confuse these state-level ESA's with the Coverdell education accounts which are federally-regulated, tax-free savings accounts that can be set up for children primarily to help with college costs.

b. School Vouchers: Vouchers, representing a certain amount of public funding, are given to parents to buy whatever type of educational product they deem suitable for their child.

3. Management Organizations may be hired to manage a school or a group of schools or an entire school district. Both of these organizations may be lumped under the title Educational Management Organizations (EMO's) and differentiated by for-profit or non-profit labels. There are currently large management organizations that operate schools across several states.

SOCIAL POLICY
SCHOOL FINANCE (PG. 4)

a. Charter Management Organizations (CMO's) are non-profit organizations that contract to run a system of charter schools. CMO's may serve any number of charter school and extend their management authority across state lines.

b. Educational Management Organizations (EMO's) are for-profit organizations that contract to run public schools with the promise of improved education, but do so based on a profit-motive and may have the right to set their own teacher and administration salary schedules. Some may have stockholders and be part of larger corporations.

4. For-profit versus nonprofit in education

a. For-profit schools are schools that earn profits for shareholders or owners. They often use the same or similar testing materials or evaluation methods as non-profits in order to make comparisons concerning student achievement.

b. Non-profit schools do not pay dividends to shareholders or provide profits for owners. Examples of nonprofit schools would be public schools, both traditional and charter, and many religious schools. All money earmarked for teaching students is used for that purpose.



ADOPTED 1977; REVISED 1985; 1986; 2016; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK
CONVENTION.

GOVERNMENT
17. ELECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) believes voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. LWVAK works to protect that right and to increase voter participation by all citizens. The LWVAK believes the state has an obligation to provide voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices. The LWVAK supports elections that are free, fair and accessible to all eligible voters and voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent.

AMPLIFICATION

1. REDISTRICTING

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) believes that current redistricting guidelines have historically led to partisan redistricting, despite the intent of the Alaska Constitution. LWVAK supports a process that is independent from the legislature and other elected and appointed persons, that is non-partisan, favors no incumbents or political parties, and promotes electoral competition. Redistricting board composition should reflect the diversity of the state, including citizens-at-large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups and a range of socioeconomic groups rather than political party interests in Alaska, where the majority of registered voters are nonpartisan or undeclared.

Whether through Constitutional amendment or Alaska state statutes, the procedures and standards of the Alaska Redistricting Board should include the following points:

- A. Specific timelines for the steps leading to a redistricting plan.
- B. Redistricting must be accomplished in an open, unbiased procedure with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process of redistricting at every level of government.
- C. Individuals should be eligible to serve on the Redistricting Board only if they satisfy additional criteria designed to increase the degree to which members of the Board are both independent and perceived to be independent from elected officials.
- D. Redistricting efforts should be subject to open meeting laws with full disclosure throughout with a process using public hearings, electronic meetings, and written notice on the plan(s) proposed for adoption.
- E. The redistricting plan adopted by the Redistricting Board should meet the following provisions:
 - 1. Adoption of the plan with more than a simple majority voter of the board.

GOVERNMENT

17. ELECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES (PG. 2)

2. Resources and staffing available equally to all board members.
3. Reviews of fairness using recognized geographic, quantitative, and geometric testing. Such testing should be used to test for (and weed out) extreme unfairness, rather than aiming for a purportedly “ideal” score on one or more quantitative measures.
4. Posting to the public should include written notice, public hearings in multiple locations and electronic meeting opportunities, and development and maintenance of an online presence.
5. Technology should be made available for public use so that citizens can make, submit, and evaluate suggested maps or portions of maps relevant to local communities.
6. In addition to existing Alaskan redistricting standards (Alaska Constitution, article VI, Section 6) expressly specify as a matter of state law adherence to standards specified in the U.S. Voting Rights Act.

Judicial Review

Speedy judicial review and appeal is of paramount importance to ensure that each election is conducted under a plan that is not in contention. The court should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met. Time limits should be set for initiating court action for review.

Provisions should be made for court review of redistricting measures and for courts to require the redistricting board to act on a predetermined schedule. Remedial provisions should be established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. A plan approved by the court should be enforceable by the court.

2. METHODS OF VOTING

The LWVAK supports a variety of voting methods, in addition to voting at the polls, which provide cost effective opportunities to maintain and expand access to the voting process for all eligible voters.

3. FELON RIGHTS

The LWVAK supports providing the right to vote to felons who have completed their incarceration time rather than having this right restored after their probation and/or parole. Further, the LWVAK supports the provision of appropriate information and assistance to felons who have completed their incarceration in order to facilitate their voter registration or re-registration.

GOVERNMENT
17. ELECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES (PG. 3)

4. VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS AT THE POLLS

Identification required of registered voters at the polls should be readily available to all citizens at no cost, including the indirect costs of obtaining proof of identity such as birth certificates. Voters should be able to use one of several forms of identification.

5. VOTER INFORMATION

The LWVAK supports the publication and distribution of a State of Alaska Voters' Pamphlet prior to each statewide primary and general election. In addition to the pamphlet contents itemized in AS 15.58.020, LWVAK believes:

All ballot measures must include official explanatory statements on effects of a "yes" vote and a "no" vote, fiscal impact, and summaries of the main arguments for and against the measures.

The number of arguments for and against the measures should be limited.

Ballot titles and measures need to be stated in clear, concise language and should avoid confusing negatives.

The pamphlet shall not contain political advertisement by political parties, other organizations or individuals, including candidates.

6. VOTING SECURITY

The LWVAK concurs with the LWV of the United States' position on voting systems that are designed, developed, and implemented so that:

They employ a voter-verifiable paper ballot or other paper record, said paper being the official record of the voter's intent;

The voter can verify, either by eye or with the aid of suitable devices for those who have impaired vision, that the paper ballot/record accurately reflects his or her intent;

Such verification takes place while the voter is still in the process of voting;

The paper ballot/record is used for audits and recounts;

The vote totals can be verified by an independent hand count of the paper ballot/record; and

Routine audits of the paper ballot/record in randomly selected precincts can be conducted in every election, and the results published by the jurisdiction.



ADOPTED 2016; REVISED 2019; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR AT LWVAK CONVENTION

GOVERNMENT
18. JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT AND RETENTION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports a judicial appointment and retention process that is merit-based, transparent, representative of and responsive to the public and to the Constitutions of the State of Alaska and United States.

AMPLIFICATION

1. THE LWVAK SUPPORTS A MERIT-BASED PROCESS FOR JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS.

The Alaska Constitution prescribes a process that calls for gubernatorial appointment to vacant positions on the bench from a list of qualified candidates forwarded by the Alaska Judicial Council. The LWVAK supports this merit-based process currently provided for in the Alaska Constitution. A merit-based process tasks a non-political panel of legal and non-legal members (Alaska Judicial Council) to evaluate judicial applicants on such factors as experience, legal knowledge and judicial temperament. Only the best qualified, tallest timber candidates are then forwarded for nomination by the panel. This merit-based system reduces opportunity for political bias, is transparent, and better serves the concept of equal justice for all than would other processes such as direct election or direct political appointment of the judiciary.

2. THE LWVAK SUPPORTS A JUDICIAL NOMINATION PROCESS THAT IS TRANSPARENT AND BALANCES THE NEED FOR EXPERTISE IN IDENTIFYING THE MERITS OF CANDIDATES WITH RESPONSIVENESS TO THE PUBLIC.

The Alaska Constitution tasks the Alaska Judicial Council with vetting candidates for vacant positions on the bench, and forwarding a list of qualified candidates to the Governor for appointment. The Constitution further identifies membership on the Alaska Judicial Council as three lawyer members appointed by the Alaska Bar Association and three non-lawyer members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Alaska Legislature. The Council is presided over by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who votes only in the case of a tie. The LWVAK supports the makeup of the Alaska Judicial Council as currently provided for in the Alaska Constitution. The six member profile of the Alaska Judicial Council balances the need for legal and practical expertise with accountability to the public and political realities.

The Alaska Judicial Council process for vetting candidates should be as transparent as possible with appropriate consideration given to personal and confidential matters of candidates.

The Alaska Judicial Council should be funded appropriately and sufficiently by the Legislature to ensure resources to adequately vet candidates on their merit and to allow for transparency through public hearings, regular public input on participants within the Alaska Legal System, and maintenance of a robust website allowing public access to the process for all Alaskans.

GOVERNMENT
JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT AND RETENTION (PG. 2)

3. THE LWVAK SUPPORTS A JUDICIAL RETENTION PROCESS THAT CALLS FOR PERIODIC,
UNCONTESTED, YES OR NO VOTES OF THE PUBLIC.

The Alaska Constitution currently provides for periodic uncontested yes or no retention votes for sitting members of the Alaska Judiciary. The LWVAK supports the current retention process provided for in the Constitution as a mechanism that allows for public accountability without introducing political bias.

The public should be adequately educated on judicial performance prior to retention votes. The Alaska Judicial Council is currently tasked by the Alaska Legislature for providing information to the public on judicial performance. The Council should continue with this function and should be adequately funded to gather and disseminate information on judicial performance from such entities as lawyers, litigants, defendants, jurors, other judges, and public observers of the judicial process. Information gathered should be made available to the public in a broad and timely manner by the Alaska Judicial Council prior to retention elections.

4. THE LWV ALASKA SUPPORTS A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH A MEMBER OF THE ALASKA
JUDICIARY MAY BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE FOR INCAPACITATION OR FOR MISCONDUCT.

The Alaska Constitution currently provides for two mechanisms for removal from office for incapacitation or misconduct: impeachment by the Legislature or by a vote of the Alaska Supreme Court upon a recommendation of the Commission on Judicial Conduct. As retention elections may be as many as ten years from incapacitation or the occurrence of proven misconduct, there should be in place a mechanism for removal from office aside from retention votes. The LWVAK supports the current provisions of the Alaska Constitution for removal by impeachment or vote of the Alaska Supreme Court.

5. THE LWV ALASKA SUPPORTS A JUDICIARY THAT REPRESENTS THE RACIAL, ETHNIC, GENDER
AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF THE STATE.

Judges appointed to the Alaska Judiciary should be appointed first and foremost based on their qualifications. The LWVAK encourages the Governor, in considering nominations of qualified candidates forwarded by the Alaska Judicial Council, to take into consideration the racial, ethnic, gender and geographic diversity of the state in making his or her appointment.

The LWVAK urges the Alaska Bar and Alaska Judicial Council to encourage qualified diverse candidates for the bench to consider and pursue appointments so as to improve the diversity of the Alaska Judiciary.



ADOPTED 1/11/2016; REAFFIRMED EACH YEAR SINCE AT LWVAK CONVENTION

APPENDIX A – ADOPTION AND REVISION DATES

Position	Date Adopted	Date(s) Revised
<i>Government</i>		
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure ¹	1968	1991
Capital Budget Process	1985	none
Constitution – Amending the Constitution by Initiative	1998	none
Constitutional Convention	1982	none
Legislative Process and Procedures	?	1993
Statutory Initiative Process, Alaska’s	2001	none
Voter Registration ¹	1968	2014
Election Processes and Procedures	2015	2019
Judicial Appointment and Retention	2016	none
<i>Natural Resources</i>		
Energy	1978	1991, 2013
Land Disposal ²	1980	none
Land Use	1975	1979, 1985
<i>Social Policy</i>		
Career Education in the Schools	1994	none
Child Care and Early Childhood Education ³	1976	1986, 2001(amended), 2018
Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Bullying ⁴	1986	1995, 2010, 2018
Youth and Adolescent Needs ⁵	1971?	1988, 2011
Landlord-Tenant Relationships	1974	1994, 2020 (updated)
School Finance	1977	1985, 1986, 2016

¹ Previously titled "Election Laws and Procedures", then, "Voter Registration & Participation"

² Previously titled "Land Use"

³ Previously titled "Day Care, " then "Child Care"

⁴ Previously titled "Domestic Violence," then "Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault"

⁵ Previously titled "Juvenile Needs"