



The Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

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Serving the Citizens of Stanislaus County, California

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LWVUS and LWV Stanislaus County Program Planning

To prepare for the LWVUS Biennial Convention in June, state and local Leagues have the opportunity to submit input regarding the priorities for education and action that convention delegates will adopt for the 2018–2020 biennium. Usually local Leagues are asked to review current LWVUS positions and suggest revisions or new studies in order to update current positions or add new ones. Positions at all levels of League are developed after the topic has been studied, and they become the basis for education and advocacy.

When the LWVUS Board met in October, 2017, it agreed that LWV’s current focused work must continue; rather than considering new or revised areas for education and action, the LWVUS Board is recommending that LWV at all levels continue the Campaign for Making Democracy Work – to champion voting rights, voter protection and mobilization, election reform, campaign finance/money in politics reform, and redistricting. As LWV is heading toward its 100th anniversary, the organization is working to engage new and future activists around its core issues to make a lasting impact on our democracy. Go to www.LWVUS.org for an overview of accomplishments in the areas of voter rights and elections since 2016.

Even though the LWVUS Board has made its recommendation for 2018, as a grassroots organization, all Leagues have the right to submit to the Convention suggested topics for prioritization. A summary of current LWVUS positions is included in this newsletter beginning on page 3. To date we have received requests from three Leagues to include other issues in our recommendations:

- LWV Los Angeles – Priority for education and advocacy for local Leagues: Criminal Justice Reform. Leagues that do not have a criminal justice position can review the LWVLA position and use the process of concurrence to adopt all or part of the position and take action. LWVSC HAS A CRIMINAL JUSTICE POSITION. See page 7.

- LWV Deerfield, IL – Make the existing LWVUS position on abolishing the electoral college an action focus for 2018-2020.
- LWV Palos Verdes Peninsula/San Pedro, CA – Initiate a national study on The Economic Impacts of Artificial Intelligence.

In making Program recommendations, our Board welcomes ideas and suggestions from members. League member input is sought and valued. If you agree that LWVUS should continue to focus on the Campaign for Making Democracy Work, email President Mary Giventer (mgiventer@pacbell.net) or Vice President Marie Bairey (gbandmb@sbcglobal.net) with your thoughts by January 31, 2018. If you believe that other LWVUS positions should be reviewed or updated or you support the recommendations of other Leagues (above), email your ideas to Mary or Marie.

In addition to providing input to LWVUS Convention delegates, LWV Stanislaus County must review its Local Program each year for possible updates or changes. Any changes must be approved by the membership at the Annual Meeting in May. Read over the Local Program included in this newsletter on pages 7 and 8, and forward any suggestions you have for updates or changes to Mary or Marie.

Your comments will be presented to our Board at its February meeting when final recommendations will be approved for submission to LWVUS by March 1, 2018. ■

Lunch and Learn

Noon, last Thursday of each month, at Ridgway's on Orangeburg (Century Center, Modesto) Chef's Choice Menu @ \$13; vegetarian lunch also available at same price.

Thursday, January 25, 2018

This month's speaker will be either Tom Orvis or Wayne Zipser from the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau. Topics include water matters, land use issues as well as other topics of interest to the Farm Bureau which are important for the general public to know about. Join us. ■

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

Citizens' 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 enforce- able 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 co-operatively 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 re-use 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 exible 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 fire-arms 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, co-ordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well-defined channels for citizen input and review (page 100). ■

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County Local Program

Housing (Adopted 1975, updated 1982 and 2003)

We recognize that the need for shelter is fundamental, and that a diverse population will desire a wide selection of housing options. Therefore, we:

- A. Support equal opportunity in housing options in Stanislaus County.
- B. Support local measures to increase the supply of a diverse range of housing types to serve a diverse population.
- C. Support local measures to increase the supply of safe and affordable housing for everyone.

Land Use (Adopted 1976, updated 1988 and 2003)

We recognize that land use decisions have an impact on many areas, notably on the quality of life and on the economy; and we recognize that land itself is an irreplaceable resource that needs to be preserved and protected. We support land use planning that:

- A. Protects farmland outside clearly defined urban boundaries to avoid unnecessary conversion of farmlands.
- B. Protects the overall quality of environment (soil, air, and water).
- C. Provides urban development contiguous with existing development where urban services can be provided.
- D. Provides adequate funding for infrastructure needs (transportation, schools, parks, government services and public utilities.)

Land use planning should involve cooperation between and among the various local regional government bodies.

Water Use (Adopted 2016)

We support water policies and practices that:

- A. Protect and ensure coordinated, sustainable use of groundwater and surface water supplies for urban, agricultural and environmental purposes.
- B. Encourage conservation.
- C. Promote creation of new water resources such as desalination, waste water reclamation, recycling and storage.
- D. Assure that water supplies meet state and federal quality standards.
- E. Make information regarding water supplies and quality clearly, concisely and readily available to the public.

Adult Criminal Justice (Adopted 1980, 1982 and 1984)

We support:

- A. The funding in Stanislaus County of a wide range of alternatives to incarceration for all but the physically dangerous offender.
- B. Efforts to further the expansion of rehabilitative programs and facilities for persons convicted of drug and alcohol abuse.
- C. A greater allocation of funds within the criminal justice budget for crime prevention, crime detection and rehabilitation.

Child Abuse and Neglect (Adopted 1985, updated 1987)

- A. We recognize child abuse as a societal problem; therefore, we support: Legislation, which addresses the jurisdictional, organizational and procedural problems in the prosecution of child abuse cases.
- B. Modification of the courtroom process to accommodate child victims.
- C. Consistent reporting and recording of child abuse and neglect cases and development of comprehensive statistics.
- D. Broad-based prevention programs that are accessible to all family members and take into consideration the ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of those being served.
- E. Efforts of public and private agencies to continually focus public attention on the problems of child abuse and neglect.

Local Library Finance (Adopted 1994, updated 1997 and 2003)

We support long-term, consistent funding of the Stanislaus County Free Library.

- A. We strongly support a dedicated source of funds which could be used only for the Library.
- B. Basic library services should remain free and become more accessible to all Stanislaus County residents in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- C. We support a long-range goal of maintaining a library of excellence.

Gang Violence (Adopted 2007)

In order to address the problem of criminal gang activity within our community, we support the development of culturally diverse intervention and enrichment programs at the elementary school level and beyond.

- A. Such programs may include family support, recreational, athletic, academic, creative and/or social activities.
- B. We encourage allocation of resources to fund these programs through public, private and/or non-profit organizations.

Municipal Government (Adopted 2008)

To assure that municipal government is open, accountable, and responsive to residents and to promote full participation by citizens, we support:

- A. A system that balances neighborhood needs with citywide perspective and
- B. Encourages and offers opportunity for increased voter and candidate participation. ■

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
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