

Position Statements: LWV Baltimore Co, LWVMD, LWVUS

LWV Baltimore County

Positions statements are summarized briefly. Complete texts and the background for these positions are available at the League Office.

GOVERNMENT

County Government/Charter

ACTION to support the concept of charter government and measures to make it efficient, effective and responsible (1969)

ACTION to oppose a full time County Council (1969) and a full time Council Chairman 1974
Action to oppose the County Attorney serving as a legal advisor and advisor and legislative draftsman for both the County Council and the County Executive. (1976)

ACTION to support maintaining the present number (7) of County Council Districts (1992) (2002). *ACTION* to support retention of the position of People's Counsel (see Land Use Positions, 1992)

Firearms Legislation (1977)

ACTION to strengthen gun control law

Real Property Assessments and Taxation (1978)

ACTION to support continued use of the real property tax as a major source of revenue for Baltimore County

Transportation

ACTION to support financing transportation and Action to support the role of Baltimore City Government

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use

ACTION to support a good system of planning and zoning

Sludge Management Utilization (1988) and/or disposal of sludge from wastewater treatment plants
ACTION to support legislation prohibiting, regulating or restricting discharge of pollutants into the sewer system or waters of Baltimore County by individuals, commerce or industry. (1982)

Solid Waste Management (1971)

ACTION to support improved solid waste management goals and practices in Baltimore County

ACTION to support increased financial aid for, and greater public awareness of, solid waste management problems (See Recycling)
Source Reduction and Recycling (1990)

Action to support emphasis on recycling and source reduction.

SOCIAL POLICY

Alternatives to the War on Drugs (2005)

ACTION to support: continuation of present drug treatment programs focusing on treatment instead of incarceration on every level when evaluated for efficacy; focusing the Government's budget mainly on education and treatment instead of enforcement and punishment; lengthening of drug treatment options to a year or longer; legalizing drugs with various degrees of regulation; decriminalizing drugs as a first step; allowing addicts to obtain their drugs from licensed medical professionals; sentencing adult dealers to prison and giving judges flexibility for first time offenders.

Department of Aging (1987)

ACTION to support programs, services, and personnel to meet the needs of Baltimore County Senior Citizens

Economic Development (1981)

ACTION to support economic development in Baltimore County through integrated planning, transportation, site selection assistance, loan guarantees, promotion and giving priority to the above order

EDUCATION

Quality of Education, Part I (1999)

Affirmation of the following to be the purposes of public education:

To prepare students to be responsible citizens and to understand and affirm the democratic values in our society

To prepare students to be economically self-sufficient

To prepare students to be life-long learners, appreciative of the arts, knowledgeable about technology and sensitive to cultural and individual differences.

ACTION to support the following to ensure that students in BCPS have well-qualified teachers in their classrooms:

Strengthening and extension of pre-service training and continued professional development

Recognition and celebration of teachers of high quality

Promotion and marketing of the teaching profession with students and the general public

Strengthening support services for new and experienced teachers (e.g. technology training, mentoring, programs, etc.

Provision of diversity training that engenders respect for academic, socio-economic, and cultural differences among students and staff

Establishment of high standards for supervision and accountability and adequate staff to ensure that performance actually meets the standards

ACTION to support the following measures in order to motivate accomplished persons to enter and remain in the teaching profession:

Incentives (ex: small schools and small classes, adequate materials, well maintained physical

plants, funds for moving expenses, etc.)

Salaries competitive with other professions

Salary supplements (merit pay) for those with high performance ratings and for those who achieve certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

ACTION to support budget priorities of staff, instructional materials and school maintenance

Sabbaticals and professional conference attendance

Efforts by BCPS to explore incentives to induce persons in other disciplines to enter the teaching profession

Finding ways to enable principals to be primarily educational leaders

Quality of Education (Teaching), Part II (2000)

ACTION to support the following programs that will ensure the Quality of Teaching:

Promotion of parent involvement in every school

Promotion of interaction between parents and teachers

Promotion of requirement by BCPS that all teachers be trained in a variety of strategies to reach and teach students coming from diverse backgrounds

Provision of the addition of non-teaching support staff for non-teaching activities

Provision by BCPS of instructional aides in all schools

Continued implementation of the recommendations of the Minority Achievement Implementation Committee (now called the Diversity and Achievement Steering Committee) as well as the recommendations for systemic change listed in the State Minority report, “Minority Achievement in Maryland”

Inclusion of all “stakeholders” in any surveys regarding special education—not just parents and teachers of special education students

Funding and development of pre-school education

Greater coordination and cooperation between BCPS and DSS in improving the quality of day care programs

Increased compensation in order to recruit and retain high quality teachers

Provision of teachers of high quality to provide remediation, acceleration and enrichment programs in elementary schools with high percentages of low achieving students

Early Childhood Education (2002)

ACTION to support the following early childhood education initiatives:

Provision by BCPS of parent education and assistance with pre-literacy and enrichment activities to families in greatest need

Provision by BCPS of Pre-K education for 4 year olds from disadvantaged families and those with special needs with an ultimate goal of provision of pre-K for all children

Funding of pre-K and all-day kindergarten with federal, state and local financing, preferably from general revenues

The Principalship (2005)

Affirmation of the following principles:

The principal’s role is key to a well-functioning school and sets the tone for its mission to successfully educate all of the students. The principal is the chief administrator of his/her school and his/her main responsibility is that of Instructional Leader.

ACTION to support the following:

Provision of discretionary funding that would allow the principal to hire a person to supervise tasks which are not directly instructional in nature

Encouragement of BCPS to expand its training program for potential principals to include all

of the requirements necessary to become a full principal and to include spending part of that training in “challenging” schools and with an emphasis on human relations
Encouragement of BCPS to put in place mechanism for teachers to evaluate the principal as part of the teacher’s overall evaluation

ACTION to support principal evaluation procedures which include appropriate input by teachers and parents

Safe Schools/Safe Communities (1996)

ACTION to support the following:

A fair, equitable, consistent discipline code and suspension policy in the Baltimore County Public Schools (frequently disseminated to parents and students), with emphasis on the need for removal of the most chronically disruptive students from the regular day school setting to a separate, alternative setting with appropriate curriculum, and for the establishment of in-school detention programs where suitable and feasible.

Increased and enhanced before and after-school programs

Increased cooperation between BCPS and other government agencies dealing with children’s welfare

Provision of funding, public and private, as needed to create and maintain safe schools and safe communities with emphasis on prevention and early intervention

Charter Schools (1998):

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore County neither supports nor opposes Charter Schools but does support specific criteria which should be implemented should Charter Schools be permitted in Baltimore County.

Definition: Charter Schools are public schools, non-profit and non-sectarian, which offer alternative approaches to education and are exempted from certain rules and regulations, except those related to health, safety, civil rights, special education, criminal background check and financial disclosure, in exchange for accountability after a specified length of time. Common characteristics are: small size, (usually fewer than 300 students); relative degree of autonomy over decisions regarding curriculum, staffing, and budget; significant parent involvement; and innovative programs.

CRITERIA:

Parents, teachers, institutions of higher education, community agencies and existing public schools should be free to apply to form charter schools. However, Boards of Trustees of Charter Schools may hire for-profit companies for specific services (e.g. tutoring, accounting, janitorial help).

Federal moneys, foundations, businesses and other agencies can supply start-up funds. For operating expenses, customary funding from local, state and federal sources should flow to charter schools.

State certification for a majority of the teachers is important. Strengthening the certification process for charter school teachers, as well as other public school teachers, along with continuous staff development is recommended.

Charter School Contracts should be reviewed frequently (e.g., one year, followed by contracts for three to five years).

Students desiring to attend should be admitted using a lottery system.

Students should take customary tests in Maryland. The charter school, itself, should be held accountable for student success, based on its curriculum plan, after three years.

Charter schools should be open to non-intrusive visits from citizens who have scheduled appointments. There should be open disclosure of finances, including annual audits, which are reported to education boards and the public.

The State Board should not limit the number of charter schools.

All governing and advisory boards and councils for charter schools should include lay citizens.

Transportation of students to charter schools should be addressed.

Monitoring and accountability are crucial for the success of charter schools—by local and state boards or by bodies appointed by them to do so.

Selection of Board of Education Members (2014)

SUPPORT for change to either a fully elected or a hybrid system (some elected/some appointed) of selection of members of the Board of Education.

SUPPORT for a staggered system of election so that the terms of all Board members would not end at the same time thus providing continuity.

SUPPORT for a four-year term of office.

SUPPORT for candidates running on a non-partisan basis.

SUPPORT for the requirement that no person serve who has a conflict of interest.

If there should be a hybrid system of selection:

SUPPORT for a requirement that the governor use his/her appointments to ensure diversity on the Board.

HEALTH CARE (1976)

ACTION to support adequate community resources

HOUSING

ACTION to support the National League position of equal opportunity for all, with emphasis on housing for low and moderate income families (1968)

ACTION to support the local Land Use position of affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income families and individuals throughout Baltimore County near centers of employment, public transportation, and community based support services, and where appropriate, in existing dwelling (1991)

ACTION to support the Basic Human Needs position of increasing the current local supplement for all assistance recipients who currently receive a supplement; creation of additional shelters through funding support by the county, but operation of shelters by private, non-profit groups (1988)

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION (HRC) (1989)

ACTION to support a strong Commission under our national human relations position of equal rights for all

JOB RETRAINING (1984, 1990)

ACTION to support retraining of dislocated workers which should be planned for in advance and occur on an ongoing basis.

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (1988)

ACTION to support increasing the current local supplement for all assistance recipients who currently receive a supplement; creation of additional shelters through funding support by the County, but operation of shelters by private, non-profit groups.

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE (SACC) (1985, 1990, 1992)

ACTION to support assumption by Baltimore County of the role of Facilitator for a diverse range of SACC services, including regulation, child care information and referral, planning, training and technical assistance; designation of SACC services as second in priority for use of school facilities; assumption of funding for SACC programs by parents and business community with government involved only for low income families on a sliding scale.

*Whatever the issue, the League
believes that efficient and economical government
requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of
responsibilities, adequate financing,
coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement
and well defined channels for
citizen input and review.*