



League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area (LWVNCA)

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**LWVNCA POSITIONS, as Readopted May 7, 2017**

**AIRPORTS**

1. Use of the three major metropolitan Washington airports [Baltimore-Washington International Thurgood Marshall (BWI), Washington Dulles International (IAD), and Ronald Reagan Washington National (DCA)] should be balanced based on overall airport infrastructure and capacity. Good ground transportation is necessary to all airports.
2. It is necessary to place limitations on the use of DCA. We support the enforcement of:
  - a. The current High Density and Perimeter Rules, and noise abatement procedures.
  - b. Other methods to limit aircraft types.
3. With regard to all three airports, jurisdictions should:
  - a. Enact responsible, comprehensive planning and zoning policies that limit development to industrial and/or commercial uses in the immediate vicinity of the airports.
  - b. Restrict residential development within the area directly affected by the presence and operations of the airports.
  - c. Consider potential development height when evaluating land use changes. (1985, 2007)

**BELTWAY SAFETY**

1. In order to control speeding and unsafe driving on the Capital Beltway and its feeder roads, we support:
  - a. the use of additional patrol officers for visibility and enforcement
  - b. the use of automated photographic speed enforcement devices as an additional system of speed enforcement.
2. We support measures to increase truck safety on the Capital Beltway and its connector roads that include:
  - a. mandatory commercial vehicle safety inspections in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia,
  - b. increased fines for truck safety violation
  - c. limiting hazardous material carriers to certain hours.
3. Weight and length limitations for commercial vehicles using the Capital Beltway and its feeder roads should not be increased.
4. Efforts among federal, state and local governments to improve coordination of inspection and enforcement activities on the Beltway should be an ongoing process (1991, 201

**COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH PLANNING**

1. LWVNCA supports:
  - a. governmental regulations of health planning (1976, 89),
  - b. regional coordination among healthcare systems and agencies in the Washington Metropolitan Area to include gathering data, sharing information, avoiding duplication of facilities and services, and controlling costs (1976, 89),
  - c. regional health education and information services to the public (1977, 89, 2016).
2. In order to increase the availability of medical services, LWV supports the concept of 24-hour clinics & the use of para-professionals (1977, 89).
3. There should be improved care for the elderly and an emphasis on community support as an alternative to long-term institutional nursing care (1977, 89).

**CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

1. We support legislation to permit the use of marijuana and heroin for medicinal purposes (1989).
2. We believe that testing for illegal drug use is a justifiable invasion of privacy when required as part of the hiring process for jobs affecting public safety and national security (1989).
3. Employees who test positive should be:
  - a. retested prior to any disciplinary action (1976, 89),
  - b. allowed to continue working or put on administrative leave,
  - c. required in each case to participate in an employee assistance program,
  - d. subjected to random drug tests for a one-year period following a positive test (1989).
4. Measures for solving the drug problem should include interdiction, enforcement, education/prevention, and treatment. Education and treatment should receive special emphasis and should be stressed over criminal justice sanctions (1989, 91).
5. Drug treatment programs that should be given public funding priority include detoxification and self-help programs, outpatient care, and the use of therapeutic communities with aftercare as part of all programs (1991).
6. Treatment programs for drug users under 18 and for pregnant women should receive priority for public funding (1991).



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7. Drug treatment should be incorporated into the sentence for any juvenile or adult convicted of a crime who tested positive at the time of arrest (1989).
8. Pregnant drug users should not be subjected to criminal prosecution just because they are pregnant. Pregnant drug users who are before the court for crimes other than the use of drugs should be placed in mandatory treatment through a justice system diversion program. We support the use of outreach nurses and counselors for pregnant drug users without the threat of legal penalties (1991).
9. Financial responsibility for drug treatment should fall, to some extent, on all of the following: insurance, patients, patients' families, governments (federal, state, and local), employers, and labor unions (1989).
10. Each jurisdiction in the metropolitan Washington area should set up its own treatment programs for drug users (1989).
11. The area jurisdictions should establish a public/private partnership through the Council of Governments (COG) to develop a long-range plan to meet treatment needs and to identify financial and in-kind resources. This partnership should include the private sector and citizen groups (1989).

### D.C. FINANCING

1. Budget Autonomy. The District of Columbia should have autonomy in budgeting locally raised revenue. The League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area (LWVNCA) supports legislation eliminating the annual Congressional D.C. appropriations budget-approval process.
2. Federal Payment. To address the District of Columbia's need for a stronger revenue base, the LWVNCA supports Congressional legislation setting forth the factors for determining an annual, predictable federal payment. The most important factors to be considered are:
  - a. taxes that the District of Columbia cannot levy because of Congressional prohibitions on the District's ability to tax; and
  - b. the cost of services provided by the District to the federal government Other factors might include the cost of state services provided by the District and the percentages of revenue that other U.S. cities receive from external sources. (2003)

### LAND USE/HOUSING

1. Regional land use planning for the Washington Metropolitan area should include a coordinated and comprehensive approach to meet housing needs. The goal of the housing component of a regional land use plan should be to:
  - a. provide adequate housing for all income levels,
  - b. promote a balanced distribution of housing and employment for all income levels,
  - c. improve the quality of housing and neighborhood environments (1975, reaffirmed 1989).

### REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

1. We accept the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) as the basic instrument for cooperative regional planning. (1966, 82, 2016).
2. We support granting COG sufficient authority so that it can resolve governmental problems that cannot be solved by local governments, planning boards and agencies(1973, 82, 87, 89, 2016).
3. Because COG should have some funding powers, we support assessments of member jurisdictions, user fees, and state and federal grants.
4. We support citizen participation at the regional level for COG and other inter-jurisdictional agencies (1973, 83, 2016).

### TRANSPORTATION

1. In support of the concept that there be some form of public transportation available for all, we endorse public policy in services and planning that:
  - a. supports a coordinated public transportation system which includes bus and rapid rail transit (1964, 70, 83, 89),
  - b. promotes and improves the present and proposed public transportation systems to encourage the use of mass transit (1963, 70, 89).
2. Priorities in transportation services and planning should include:
  - a. transportation systems services that are convenient, frequent, regular, speedy, and economical to the user and for the benefit of the larger community (1963, 64, 70, 83, 89),
  - b. reduced air pollution through the promotion of mass transportation systems (1970, 89),
  - c. allocation of road space for use of high-occupancy vehicles (buses, carpools, vanpools) to speed services, including traffic control measures.
3. We support public participation and supervision in determining information needed and in evaluating transportation proposals, transportation planning, and operations. Public involvement and decision-making should include
  - a. appointment of citizen members to decision-making boards with full authority to participate in their functions, and enough tenure to master the subject. (These members should be residents of the jurisdictions involved and include consumer advocates who do not have business connections or official roles in the transportation and appropriations process) (1971, 89),
  - b. every effort by local governments to include minorities, senior citizens, economically and/or physically challenged persons and other traditionally under- represented citizens on transportation and land use advisory committees and to facilitate this participation (1997),
  - c. open public meetings of all regulatory and public management boards (1971, 89),



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- d. compulsory paid publications in general circulation newspapers or proposals on which public review is to be held (1971, 89),
  - e. decision-making on the level of services for the regional mass transit system by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority (WMATA) with local input, including citizen input early in the decision-making process (1981, 89).
4. We support financial measures that include:
- a. informing the public of the total costs of auto use and full public disclosure of the costs of transportation service, of who pays for service and who receives it, and of full cost/benefit information,
  - b. public investment to finance public transportation systems, to encourage substantially greater use of mass transportation, to increase resources for bus and rail transit, to achieve a realistic alternative to private auto use, to provide funds for bus shelters and information services (1971, 83, 89),
  - c. reduction of subsidies to auto use, such as tax favors which support parking and free parking for employees paid out of public funds (1971, 89).
  - d. the use of a dedicated tax to help fund public transportation. The objective of such a tax should be to spread the costs of mass transit among the total population and to encourage the use of mass transit instead of the automobile. A sales tax which excludes such necessities as food and medicines would be the best means of financing mass transportation in the metropolitan area. The most important criteria to be used in evaluating particular taxes dedicated to transportation should be revenue potential, timeliness, and reliability (1980). Note: the above position applies only to the Washington metropolitan area, and may be acted upon within the context of interstate regional cooperation, despite its partial conflict with the LWVMD, LWV-VA and LWVDC positions.
5. We support the integration of transportation and land use planning on local and regional levels (1997).
6. We support an interstate compact authority for regional transportation.
- a. Members representing corporate, environmental, social, and political jurisdictions would best promote a regional approach to transportation planning.
  - b. Members representing political jurisdictions would best produce cooperation among/between local jurisdictions and would best promote efficiency and flexibility in meeting transportation needs.
  - c. The following areas of transportation planning should come within the jurisdiction of a regional transportation authority: Roads and highways;  
  
urban and suburban transit, including bus and rail; interstate rail, including connections among

systems, i.e., Amtrak, Marc, etc.; pedestrian/bike paths; water, i.e., water taxis, ferries, etc.; bridges and tunnels.

- d. Approved projects should be funded through: Federal funds appropriated through transportation authorization act; state and local contributions; user fees, including tolls, fares, and other fees; private funding; bonds; gasoline tax (2004).

### WATER RESOURCES

1. In order to ensure a safe and adequate water supply for metropolitan Washington and to restore the quality of our streams and rivers, we support:
  - a. conservation and protection of drinking water and supply sources. Sources of drinking water serving the metropolitan area, such as the Potomac River and Occoquan and Patuxent Reservoirs, must be maintained and protected against pollution from both point and non-point sources,
  - b. regional demand reduction and water conservation measures to reduce annual per capita use --
    - i. Contingency plans should be developed on a regional basis to provide for mandatory restrictions on water use in time of emergency.
    - ii. Measures to recycle treated wastewater in industrial, agricultural, and other non-potable systems and measures to reduce the use of water of drinking water quality as a conveyer of wastes should be encouraged to the extent consistent with public health and hydrological requirements
  - c. water-sharing measures to meet emergencies and to protect the physical and biological integrity of the sources,
  - d. protection of groundwater,
  - e. official consideration of new drinking water sources
    - i. Sources within the metropolitan region should be investigated as possible adjuncts to existing water sources
    - ii. Construction of major upstream dams on the Potomac or its tributaries for the purpose of providing additional water supplies for the metropolitan region should not be undertaken unless other options have been found insufficient to meet the essential needs of the region.
2. We support regional planning to improve wastewater treatment management. Final selection for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities should be based on meeting national clean water objectives, protecting public health, and minimizing environmental, energy, and cost impacts (1979, 89, 2016).