

League _____ # of Participants _____ Date _____

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND PROGRAM PLANNING
2021-23**

League positions at the state level allow us to support or oppose issues before the General Assembly and the Administrative Branch at the state level. The positions of the League of Women Voters of Maryland are adopted after a committee has conducted a study and produced fact sheets and consensus questions. Members in each of the local Leagues meet to discuss and come to consensus on the issue.

As we are a grass roots organization, the Board of LWVMD is soliciting study suggestions for 2021-23.

There are two parts to program planning for LWVMD: (1) Review of Current League Positions and (2) Proposals for New Studies.

MARYLAND STATE POSITIONS

A. GOVERNMENT

1. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Action to secure an effective, nonpartisan judiciary; and to promote fair and appropriate sentencing, including abolition of the death penalty; and a correctional system, including probation and other alternatives to incarceration, that protects society and prepares offenders for successful reintegration into the community. Action to support access by indigent criminal defendants to legal counsel at every decisional stage of the judicial process, including bail hearings (1963, 1964, 1967, 1970, 1987, 1989, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2019).

2. ELECTION PROCESS

Action to assure an election system that is representative, feasible to implement and increases voter participation, as well as equitable, accessible, fiscally responsible, accountable and enforceable. Action to support same day registration. Action to assure fair campaigns and elections. Action to institute elections to fill vacancies in the General Assembly. Action to support more open primary elections and taxpayer funded primary elections for all recognized parties. Action to support a mix of single and multi-member legislative districts and coterminous boundaries. Action to oppose term limits for members of the General Assembly. Opposition to a requirement for uniform voting systems unless funded by the state. (1972, 1985, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018).

3. ETHICS

(LWVMD has never specifically studied governmental ethics. We have, however, strongly supported (in accordance with the LWVUS Principles and positions) legislation and administrative action which will make government more responsive and accountable to the voters, such as open meetings, accessibility of records to the public, and a code of ethics for government office holders and officials.)

4. FIREARMS CONTROL

- a) Requirement of a proficiency test as part of the procedure for obtaining a hunting license.
- b) Restriction on the availability of handguns (not including the banning of handguns).
- c) Registration of all handguns including a more effective identification process.
- d) Compilation of more adequate and uniform firearm and firearm crime statistics by the State Police.
- e) Development of police public relations programs to educate the public about firearms, especially gun safety, gun laws, and gun crime and accident statistics.

5. FISCAL POLICY

Action to promote an equitable and efficient fiscal structure for Maryland and to improve the fiscal relationships between the state and its political subdivisions. Action to support or oppose proposed changes to Maryland's revenue structure, using certain principles to analyze and evaluate the proposed changes. Action to increase the budgetary authority of the legislature and to achieve a more effective budget process. (1976, 1981, 1999, 2004).

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Action to support county home rule, with preference for charter. (1967, 1983, 1985).

7. REDISTRICTING

Action to assure a state redistricting process and standards that promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and House of Representatives with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny. (2004)

8. STATE CONSTITUTION

Action to secure a constitution that is clear, concise and confined to fundamentals. (1962).

RETAIN

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UPDATE

COMMENTS:

B. NATURAL RESOURCES

1. COAL

Action to oppose the granting of eminent domain for, and the construction of, a coal slurry pipeline through Maryland. (1986) Action to support the collection of taxes and fees from the coal industry for costs to the public from the mining of Maryland coal. (1987) Action to oppose strip mining on slopes steeper than 20 degrees. (1993).

2. HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

Action to promote the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste and to educate the public on safe disposal procedures. (1984)

3. LAND USE/GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Action to encourage the State to establish goals, guidelines, and standards for land use, with local implementation of land use policies. (1975, 1979, 1991).

4. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Action to promote informed decisions affecting solid waste management. (1995).

5. TRANSPORTATION

Action to support an integrated transportation system and mass transit systems which are efficient, safe, clean and accessible. Support for adequate and equitable funding and cooperative regional programs is necessary to achieve these goals. (2002).

6. CLIMATE CHANGE

Action on climate change is based on the LWVUS position to support comprehensive legislation to control climate change, and support for predominant reliance on renewable resources.

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COMMENTS:

C. SOCIAL POLICY

1. ADULT LITERACY

Action to ensure availability of free or low cost basic English language instruction for adult Maryland residents who are not proficient in reading, writing, speaking and understanding English. (2009).

2. CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Action to support a comprehensive range of child-centered services to ensure all children a chance to grow toward stable, productive adulthood. (1995)

3. DEATH WITH DIGNITY

- a) The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes state laws should grant the option for a terminally ill person to request medical assistance from a relevant, licensed physician to end one's life.
- b) The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes such legislation should include safeguards against abuse for the dying and/or medical personnel. (2019)

4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Action to support preventing initial and repeat occurrences of violence against spouses, domestic partners, the elderly, and children. Action to support a strong statewide response to violence that is integrated, interdisciplinary, and adequately funded, involving all segments of the law-enforcement and judicial systems, the medical community, the schools, social services, animal care and control agencies, and the private sector, with a primary focus on the safety of victims. (2000)

5. DRUG AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Action to legalize the use of marijuana for any use, including medicinal, subject to restrictions on production and distribution. (2012)

6. DRUNK DRIVING

Action to promote strong governmental measures and educational programs to address the problem of the drinking driver. (1983 and 2001) - Support For:

- a) A blood alcohol concentration (BAC) not to exceed 0.08 standing as both the legal definition of driving while intoxicated and absolute proof of guilt per se in alcohol-related driving offenses.
- b) The administration of BAC tests when there is a probable cause to believe that a driver is under the influence of alcohol.
- c) Courts and other agencies expediting the handling of alcohol-related driving offenses.
- d) Statewide guidelines for rehabilitation programs, which should be locally administered with costs shared by the offenders.

Judges' use of a variety of sentences for alcohol-

7. EDUCATION

Action to support measures which recognize the primary responsibility for funding public elementary and secondary education lies with the state. (1972, 1975) Action to support the state aiding local school systems in attracting and retaining competent teachers. (1989) Action to oppose using public funding for vouchers to enable parents to send their children to private elementary and secondary schools. (2001) Action to encourage the inclusion of certain criteria in any legislation or regulations governing the establishment of Public Charter Schools. (2001) Action to ensure students have an opportunity to pass high school graduation tests. (2005) Opposed BOOST scholarship program for students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch to attend private and religious schools that currently receive state funding for computers and textbooks. (2018 reduced increase in funding).

8. MARRIAGE/CIVIL UNION EQUALITY

Action to ensure that Maryland law does not discriminate in its recognition of all marriages/civil unions on the basis of gender or religious definitions of marriage. (2007).

9. HEALTH CARE and HEALTH CARE APPEALS

Action to ensure a health care appeals system which protects patients, makes insurers accountable and objectively addresses patients' concerns. (1999).

10. HOUSING

Action to develop a state housing policy responsive to the need for more affordable housing and to clarify landlord/tenant relationships. (1982, 1983).

11. MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Relied on LWVUS positions: One of the goals of social policy should be to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families; Increase emphasis on cash assistance; Benefit levels should sufficient to provide adequate food; and Pay equity

RETAIN

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UPDATE

COMMENTS:

PART 2 PROPOSALS FOR NEW STUDY OR PROJECT

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR NEW STUDIES: Please review these before discussing ideas for new studies.

Does the League already have a position?

Is government action needed? Or possible?

Is the state the appropriate level to address the issue? Is the issue timely?

Will League involvement make an impact?

Is there member interest? Will it attract new members?

Do we have people power to staff the study?

Proposed LWVMD Study

Title:

Purpose: (Scope of Study)

Please return your program planning suggestions to Elaine Apter Program Chair

email: eapter@lwvmd.org

Due Date: February 26, 2021

Submitted by _____