

## PROGRAM PLANNING 2018-2020

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**Please bring your Member Handbook and this Fact Sheet to the Meeting!**  
(If you can't find your handbook, or forget to bring it with you, we'll have extra copies available and copies are available in the LWVMC office.)

### WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

Our annual Program Planning meetings are your opportunities to show support for or suggest changes to our current League studies and positions. We use studies to update or revise the positions that allow us to educate, advocate and testify. The program platform that we adopt helps us move our mission forward. This year we will review league positions at the national (LWVUS) and local (LWVMC) levels.

LWVMC is looking for your ideas for studies and programs. Resource committees were asked to send suggestions for discussion. New and continuing studies are based on member input and we want suggestions for topics for discussion group meetings, Trending Topics and field trips. Our Trending Topics, held in county libraries from September to May, are chosen for timeliness and their appeal to League members and the community. The results from our Program Planning meetings are used by the LWVMC Board to decide on the program elements to recommend for member adoption at our Annual Meeting in May, or to recommend to the national capital area (LWVNCA) and state ((LWVMD) boards or to the LWVUS National Convention.

### Definition of Terms:

- *Retain/Keep:* the position should remain as is
- *Edit:* the position needs minor wording changes to improve the clarity of the position
- *Drop:* the position should be deleted because it is no longer relevant or no longer supported
- *Adopt:* a new study should be conducted
- *Re-adopt:* a current study should be continued
- *Informational Update:* a new study is not needed, but members should receive information on new developments through discussion group presentations and/or newsletter articles

### Evaluation Criteria for New and Continuing Studies:

- Does the League already have positions?
- Do we need to update or revise any positions?
- Is government action needed? Possible? Likely?
- Is the study proposed at the right League level? At what government level should action be taken?
- Is the issue timely? Why? Will League involvement have an impact?
- Are members interested in working on a study? Do we have a leader for the study? Will new members be interested?

## **PART 1: LWVUS and LWVMD PROGRAMS**

League principles and the request for program and action recommendations are included in the LWVUS bylaws. LWVUS positions are grouped into four categories: *representative government, international relations, natural resources and social policy*. This year, local Leagues are asked to share information with LWVUS on how their work impacts the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® (CMDW) and to identify LWVUS positions for use in education and lobbying. The CMDW is working on voting rights, improving elections, campaign finance/money in politics and redistricting. The campaign seeks to ensure a free, fair and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters. Efforts include: advocating against barriers in the voter registration process (e.g., voter photo ID laws); support for the Voting Rights Advancement Act; speaking out against the new 'Election Integrity Commission' that is a vehicle to attempt to suppress the vote; and ensure compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). LWVUS and LWVMD continue to challenge state laws that enable partisan gerrymandering. One question for Program Planning is whether LWVMD supports the program focus and/or would like to recommend another program item.

Our LWVMD positions are in your Member Handbook on pp. 41-52. LWVMD is not asking for input this year, but consider suggesting the need for updates of positions. At the LWVMD Convention In June 2017 the following studies were adopted: *Bail and Corrections, Civic Education and Death with Dignity*.

## **PART 2: LWVMD PROGRAMS**

Our LWVMD positions are in your Member Handbook on pp. 24a - 40. We have positions on Agricultural Policy, Budget Process, Charter and County Government, Child Care, Children's Services, Corrections, Education, Elderly, Election Process, Fire & Rescue Services, Health Care, Housing & Public Accommodations, Land Use Planning, Local Revenue, Police Services and Transportation. Consider studies that may be needed to update positions.

### **Ongoing studies from 2017-18 being proposed for re-adoption for 2018-19:**

Economic Development - Montgomery County has completely revamped and reorganized the area of economic development. Plans are to continue to learn more about these new policies and organization for 2018-2019. The study committee has collected information regarding the transition of economic development in Montgomery County from being promoted by a county department to becoming an activity involving not only a variety of county government offices, but also two major public/private partnerships. The partnerships receive substantial financial support from the county government. While the League members have been informed about the structural support of the economic development activity, the results obtained through the new structure remain to be examined and reported upon. The committee suggests that economic development accomplishments achieved during the coming year and county funding for the various entities involved in economic development should be monitored.

Health and Human Services – *Substance Use, Abuse and Treatment in Montgomery County*. Plans are to continue our study of substance use affecting Montgomery County youth and adults, including the availability of treatment for substance abuse. We are interviewing county personnel and organization representatives, collecting data and reviewing positions.

### **Ideas suggested for information or updates include:**

County Council – How does it work? How many members, how are they elected and who do they represent? What are committees and responsibilities? What are the powers of the

council? What are basic calendar items for their agenda? Fact Sheet could be used for our Speaker's Bureau and made available to new residents or voters, in realtors' packets, etc.

County Executive Office – What are the departments, boards, committees and commissions under the County Executive? Basic calendar items for their agenda. Fact Sheet could be used for our Speaker's Bureau, available to new residents or voters, in realtors' packets, etc.

Planning Department – What is the Planning Board? How members selected and what are their terms? Responsibilities include: sector plans, master plans, zoning, design, statistics, Subdivision Staging Policy – how are they determined and implemented?

Health care, Affordable Care Act, Medicare and Medicaid – Clarify designations of care (e.g., emergency, in-patient, observation, outpatient, Mobile Med), services provided and their use by county residents. Insurance updates, revisions and changes.

"Fake News" -- How LWVMC can help combat "fake news"?

Census 2020: the far-reaching implications of accuracy/inaccuracy. Decennial redistricting is based on the decennial Census, as are many federal formula grants to states. Consider efforts for pre-Census boundary determinations. If the Census 2020 is done sloppily, incompletely or with partisan intent, how would Maryland know? Can Maryland audit the US Census to test for accuracy? If Maryland finds that the Census 2020 is inaccurate, what are remedies? How will boundaries affect the community and schools?

Gerrymandering -- How can LWVMD work with LWVVA to help broker a deal to combat gerrymandering in both states? We can help by sponsoring a series of debates for the various county and state-level races.

### **New LWVMC studies (possibly consensus) suggested include:**

Status of Technical Education in the county (from Annual Meeting): What is being offered? Which high schools are providing to how many students?

Study of the effectiveness of the new Montgomery County Public Campaign Finance law – proposed by MDW. Law allows candidates for County Executive and County Council to apply for matching funds if they have secured a particular amount of contributions on their own. MDW would study and report on whether this provision accomplished the stated objectives of encouraging greater voter participation in county elections, increasing opportunities for county residents to run for office and reducing the influence of large contributions from business, political action groups and large organizations. Campaign financing in Montgomery County was last studied in 2009. The study would not begin until January 2019, after the November 2018 election. (Note: It may be difficult to isolate the effects of public campaign financing from the effects of term limits since both seem to be factors in the large number of candidates for both offices in 2018).

Funding (underfunding) of MD pension system

Amendment to MD Constitution to allow Citizen Initiatives

Food Sustainability – Steps to Reduce Food Insecurity

The Agriculture Study Committee has reviewed some of the efforts promoted by the county to establish a comprehensive understanding of Montgomery County food. An analysis of food needs in the county along with development of a food referral network has been recommended as part of a food security strategy. Increased access to locally produced foods is part of the strategy. Other aspects of the strategy involve education in nutrition and culinary skills, making transportation to food centers convenient and making outreach available to

seniors and children. Issues are complex and the study of how to effectively reduce food insecurity in the county would benefit from an expanded study involving members interested in educational programs and transportation policy as well as food production and availability. Greenhouse Gas Emissions -- The County Council voted in a resolution to eliminate 100% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. It will be extremely hard to reach this goal --- we need to figure out how to make progress towards it on all fronts and start making progress now.

### **Trending Topics and Discussion Group Suggestions:**

Sexual harassment /abuse

Young voters: increasing voter registration, voting and participation

Political parties – are they alive or dead?

Tax reform – what will it mean for my 2018 Return?

Business incentives

What is happening with health care?

Artificial intelligence – how it is changing the world? What are personal and job losses?

End of issues and death with dignity

Electoral College

Affordable housing

Transportation and Traffic – Road congestion, BRT/Toll Roads, Purple Line updates, MARC Brunswick expansion dedicated funding for Metro. Transportation Planning Board (MWCOG/TPB) and “Activity Centers”

Autonomous and Connected Vehicles

Shaping the Future of Smart Cities: The Role of the Geospatial Industry. What is a "smart city"? Is Montgomery County moving toward “smart city”? What are hurdles to adoption? What are the issues around data privacy, cybersecurity/ransom-ware and privatization of public sector?

Health and Sanitation Strategic Plan to Achieve Food Security (2016 County Bill)

Juvenile Justice - Findings of the county’s “School-to-Prison-Pipeline” report. Juveniles’ access to attorneys trained in juvenile law

Book discussions at the DG meetings when there is no presentation by a resource committee. The book topic could be tied to our LWVMC positions.

### **Field trip ideas:**

Dickerson incinerator

Agricultural Reserve

Clarksburg correctional facility

Underground RR Trail

Sandy Spring Museum

Safe Passages Center