



To: State LWV Presidents and Executive Directors
From: LWVUS Mission Impact
Re: Setting 2019 Legislative Priorities

Dear State Presidents and Executive Directors:

Congratulations on surviving the 2018 election season!

As you move on from the election and consider your upcoming state legislative session, LWVUS would like to recommend adding legislative priorities under the Making Democracy Work® Campaign (MDW) in your state. This will allow for a strong unified “voice” at all levels of the League across the country.

There are many opportunities to defend voting rights, protect our democracy and support pro-voter reforms in states across the country. Depending on where you live, you may have already been deeply involved in these fights and victories in recent years. There is still so much to do to protect voters and support pro-voter reforms across the country. The outcome of the 2018 election has opened the door to opportunities nationwide. While LWVUS will be focusing on a democracy reform agenda with the U.S. Congress, we also want to make sure we are supporting efforts to defend our democracy at the state and local levels.

Understanding how limited the resources are in the field, we want to offer more support to Leagues lobbying on MDW issues that will further impact underrepresented communities the most. Below is a list of issues in which we’re confident Leagues can play a major role. Use this list to determine and focus what your League will concentrate on when your legislature convenes in January. [And tell us what you decide by taking five minutes to let us know about the priorities you set!](#)

Election Administration Reforms

- **Voter Registration Reforms:** This list includes reforms that make it easier for voters to register and maintain their voter registration, including permanent and portable options.
 - **[Online voter registration](#):** Make online voter registration accessible to all. Allow voters to check their registration and update their information through an online portal.
 - **Election day registration (Same day registration):** Allows voters to register or update their information on Election Day and cast a regular ballot.
 - **Automatic voter registration:** Automatically register voters at state assistance agencies including the DMV unless they opt out. Reforms should also address civil rights focused remedies to cure voter registrations that could be compromised due to clerical errors.
- **Early voting and absentee voting:** Consider legislation or reforms that would expand early voting hours, especially weekend hours on the weekend before Election Day, and provide voters with the opportunity to request an absentee ballot.

Resource: [LWVUS Recommendations to Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#)

Voter Protection

- **State Voting Rights Act (SVRA):** Currently, 3 states have these options to provide a means of protection to underrepresented communities to replace the federal VRA that was overwhelmingly paralyzed after *Shelby v. Holder*. The League is developing model legislation and would like to offer this as a legislative option for interested and viable states.



- **Voter ID:** Voters should not be required to show ID when voting.
- [Reject proof-of-citizenship requirements](#) in voter registration.
- **Voter List Maintenance:** These processes should be done in accordance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). List maintenance is necessary and important but should be done responsibly. Large scale voter purges without safeguards often result in wrongful disenfranchisement and should be avoided.

Redistricting and Census

- **Reform redistricting systems:** Work with your legislature or through the citizen initiative process (if available in your state) to propose reforms that take the process of drawing maps out of the hands of politicians and work toward independent, fair and nonpartisan map drawing processes.
- **Defend existing systems:** Protect the independent redistricting processes currently in place. Defend recent reforms that passed with voter support in recent elections.
- **Protect apportionment criteria:** Ensure that districts are drawn based on population. Oppose efforts that change apportionment based on citizens or voters.
- [Funding for Census:](#) State and local governments can provide funding for the Census in communities across the country to ensure an accurate count and make up for a lack of public education funding from other sources. State and local funding can provide an opportunity to combat the possibility of an undercount.

Resources: [LWVUS Redistricting Action Kit](#)
[LWVUS Census Action Kit](#)

Money in Politics

- **Disclosure:** Voters deserve to know who is trying to influence their vote. Leagues should be advocating for transparency with regards to funding of political campaigns, advertisements and expenditures.
- [Public financing systems:](#) Advocate for public financing systems that put value on small donors, not big donors or secret money, in our electoral process.

Constitutional Conventions

- There is [a movement in state legislatures](#) that calls for support of an Article V Constitutional Convention. LWVUS opposes the call for this convention and supports efforts to rescind previously passed resolutions. This is a very targeted effort with different opportunities based on your state. See list below for potential threats and rescission targets.
- Threat states: MT, MD, IA, NE, SD, WA, ME, ID, KY, VA, and SC.
- Rescission states: CO, NH, NE, PA, and NC.

We realize that not all states will have opportunities related to these topics and other may have many opportunities. We also realize that many states are dealing with other pressing issues. The mission of the League of Women Voters is to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. We cannot carry out this mission without having a focus on some or all of the priorities suggested above. We hope that you will consider these and incorporate them into your planning for the 2019 legislative cycle. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out using the contact information below.

Don't forget to let us know what priorities you set! [Fill out our quick survey.](#) This will help us support your work!

In League,

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