

LWV Urban Policy position revision discussion February 3, 2016

Capital Lakes, Encore Room
333 West Main St, Madison WI
7:00 p.m.

Here are the revisions to the LWVWI Urban Policy Position that the state league proposes and that we will be discussing at the February 3 meeting. Please bring these with you to the meeting. We will not be e-mailing them as mentioned in the Bulletin. The Kaminski memo and proposed rewrite of the Urban Policy position are posted on our website lwvdanecounty.org. Please let Edith Sullivan, program chair, etsesq@aol.com/ 608-230-5881 know if you plan to come (will help in rounding up enough chairs!) Thanks.

I. Andrea Kaminski's instructions to local leagues

DRAFT REVISION – 01/07/2016

Drafted by Urban Policy Position Update Committee for review by local Leagues.

Items ~~crossed out~~ are to be deleted. Items **in bold face** are to be inserted.

January 7, 2016

To: Local Leagues in Wisconsin
From: Andrea Kaminski, LWVWI State Office
Re: Urban Policy position update – draft revision attached

The Urban Policy Position Update Committee has reviewed the comments submitted by 11 local Leagues on our current state Urban Policy position. While some Leagues felt the position applied to rural and suburban communities as much as to urban areas, others had never attempted to use the position because they felt that the term “urban” did not apply to their community.

Because this year's revision is only intended to update the Urban Policy position, the Committee concluded it could not recommend all of the changes suggested by local Leagues, including a change in the name of the position. The committee felt that to do so would be beyond the scope of a position update. However, the committee believes that it may be worthwhile to create a parallel position for non-urban communities sometime in the future. That said, the committee recognizes that portions of this Urban Policy position may be applicable to non-urban communities, and a paragraph to that effect has been added to the narrative for the position (see page 2 of the attached revision draft).

(list of committee members omitted)

II. The revision of the Urban Policy position being put forward by the State committee for local comment

URBAN POLICY

~~Promote the fiscal well-being and the quality of urban life.~~ **Promote the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational and environmental quality of life for all residents.**

Support of the following positions and measures:

~~The state government~~ **State, county and local governments** should develop ~~a policy~~ **interrelated policies** to improve ~~urban~~ fiscal and growth management **through such means as:**

- **“smart growth” practices that encourage sustainability, green space, population density and equitable development. These practices should consider the future service needs of aging community members, while also addressing the needs of the younger people who are replacing them in the workplace;**
- **consolidated governmental services;**
- **investments to increase the tax base;**
- **subsidies that enable and expand affordable housing near urban centers, workplaces and public transit for low- and middle-income and senior populations, as well as persons with disabilities and persons experiencing homelessness;**
- **investments to secure and maintain infrastructural integrity and modernization;**
- **sustainable practices for meeting energy needs, food security and recreation;**
- **planning and programs that promote inclusive, multi-modal transit, including bicycle-friendly and pedestrian-friendly passage, as well as wired and wireless communication networks;**
- **programs in housing, education, recreation, job training, energy efficiency, child and elder care should be available to complement measures intended to enhance the economic base and to further the quality of life for all residents.**

State aids should be targeted to ~~both declining and/or distressed Wisconsin communities~~ **urban areas**. ~~In grant allocations further consideration should be given by state agencies to distressed rural communities, as well as distressed cities.~~

(NOTE: the following two sections have been incorporated in the bullet points above.)

~~Wisconsin's urban policy role should emphasize measures that enhance the local economic base. The use of aid for particular programs is considered essential to the encouragement of local development programs. Supportive services through technical assistance from state agencies should be available.~~

~~Appropriate programs in housing, education, and job training should be available to complement measures intended to enhance the economic base. The overall goal is to create or preserve productive, self-reliant neighborhoods and communities.~~

Background

At the 1976 national convention, delegates added cities/urban crisis to the national program. The 1978 convention adopted an "evaluation of urban policy options, with emphasis on fiscal policy.

In Wisconsin, League members also studied the appropriate role of the state government in urban policy. They felt aid should go to both declining and distressed communities in the state, using these definitions:

Fiscally declining cities have these characteristics:

- a stabilized tax base, showing little change over a long period of time; and
- a stabilized or declining population (with growing numbers of elderly and poor, which is unable to support a major increase in property taxes).

Fiscally distressed cities have the above, as well as these additional characteristics:

- a loss of a major portion of the employment base and/or employers who are unable to provide job opportunities for low-skilled and low-income residents;
- a rapidly deteriorating housing stock including significant numbers of housing units constructed prior to 1939;
- a rapid incremental increase in labor costs to municipalities, due in part to escalating labor and pension costs.

In 1978, concurrent with the study, the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the LWVWI produced the film, "QUIET CHANGES: Small Towns in Crisis," which examined the urban problems of seven small cities in Wisconsin. Funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, the film was intended to stimulate viewer discussion.

The position has been used in action on laws governing such development techniques as Tax Incremental Financing and Industrial Revenue Bonds.

After a number of Leagues noted that the Urban Policy position was outdated, delegates at the 2015 Annual Meeting of LWVWI authorized an update of the position. It was found that while some Leagues felt the position applied to rural and suburban communities as much as urban, others in had never attempted to use the position because they felt that the term “urban” did not apply to their community. The position was updated with the idea that nonurban communities would use portions of the policy as they deem applicable.

~~(For details, see *Government*.) There has been no action specifically using Urban Policy positions in recent years.~~

RELATED POSITIONS:

- LWVUS positions
 - Urban Policy <http://lww.org/content/urban-policy>
 - Transportation <http://lww.org/content/social-policy-0>
 - Healthcare <http://lww.org/content/health-care>
 - Fair Housing <http://lww.org/content/social-policy-0>
 - Education <http://lww.org/content/social-policy-0>
 - Employment <http://lww.org/content/social-policy-0>
- LWVWI positions:
 - Land Use <http://www.lwwwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/NaturalResourcesAirLandPolicies.aspx>
 - Energy <http://www.lwwwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/NaturalResourcesEnergy.aspx>
 - Healthcare – <http://www.lwwwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/SocialPolicyHealthCareMentalHealth.aspx>
 - Water <http://www.lwwwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/NaturalResourcesWaterQuality.aspx>
 - Education <http://www.lwwwi.org/IssuesAdvocacy/SocialPolicyEducation.aspx>

III. The following submissions were among those considered by the state committee members as they developed the Urban Policy revision. They are provided as background, with no implication that the Dane County league must adhere to the suggestions made earlier, before the new language was proposed.

A. These are the answers Dane County League submitted to State

LWV State Urban policy/position Survey

1. Name & League:

Edith Sullivan Dane County

2. How did your League approach this questionnaire?

Feedback from units and one individual

3. Has your league attempted to use the LWVWI Urban Policy in the past two years for your advocacy?

No.

4. If you answered Yes for the last question, did you find the position to be adequate or inadequate for advocacy? Do you have any comments?

N/A

5. If you found the position to be inadequate, why?

N/A

6. Some League members have noted that every provision of our state Urban Policy Position could apply to any declining and distressed Wisconsin community. Should the name of the position be changed to something broader that encompasses all communities in the state?

Yes. While there was no consensus on what the change should be, these were suggested: Economic Policy; Community Policy; Community Development; Urban and Community Policy; Self-reliant neighborhoods and communities

No. No and leave it as Urban Policy and define League use of the term.

7. The current members of the Position Update committee have discussed the possibility of cross referencing related LWVWI positions such as Land Use, Transportation, Healthcare, Employment and Housing as part of the update. Would you find the position more useful for advocacy if this occurred?

Yes. We need more explicit state positions in the listed areas to have advocacy. LWVDC positions on these topics would be a good place to start expanding the state positions. Cross-reference the listed positions plus education, human services, & energy.

8. Can your league designate a member to serve on the Urban Policy Position Update Committee, Meetings will be (etc)

No volunteers at this time.

9. Other comments or suggestions for the Urban Policy Committee?

Suggest considering the Dane County league positions on some of these topics The address is:
<http://www.lwvdanecounty.org/our-positions/>

B. These are the thoughts Sara Markham submitted to State- individual members had been invited to share their thoughts.

To: Edith Sullivan, LWVDC Board Director of Program

From: Sara Markham, LWVDC member; 608.213.1886; shmarkham@tds.net

Date: November 21, 2015

RE: LWV-WI call for recommendations on current Social Policy: Urban Policy positions, including title, scope, and adequacy for effective action at the state and local levels.

Current LWV-WI Positions on Urban Policy:

Promote the fiscal well-being and the quality of urban life.

Support of the following positions and measures:

1. The state government should develop a policy to improve urban fiscal and growth management.
2. State aids should be targeted to both declining and distressed Wisconsin communities. In grant allocations further consideration should be given by state agencies to distressed rural communities, as well as distressed communities.
3. Wisconsin's urban policy role should emphasize measures that enhance the local economic base. The use of aid for particular programs is considered essential to the encouragement of local development programs. Supportive services through technical assistance from state agencies should be available.
4. Appropriate programs in housing, education, and job training should be available to complement measures intended to enhance the economic base. The overall goal is to create or preserve productive, self-reliant neighborhoods and communities.

**How Can We
Envision a
More Perfect
City in
Wisconsin?**

**Current Title:
“Urban
Policy” as a
Subcategory
of the LWV
Positions**

“Social Policy”:**Suggestion:**

Consider first defining what is meant by “urban” used in the title and in the general statement of purpose, as an initial definitional point of reference, one that could influence the content and scope of positions taken.

According to the 2015-2016 *State of Wisconsin Blue Book* (pages 233, 735-738, 745), there are 190 “cities” as of 1/1/2014. Population determines whether a community qualifies to be in one of four Wisconsin-designated “city” classifications: **First Class Cities** (150,000 or more), currently only Milwaukee; **Second Class Cities** (39,000-149,999), currently there are 14, including Madison; **Third Class Cities** (10,000-38,999), currently 34, including Middleton and Sun Prairie; **Fourth Class Cities** (under 10,000), currently 141, including Edgerton, Fitchburg, Monona, Stoughton, and Verona. A Wisconsin “city” must initiate any action to become reclassified.

Current General Statement of Policy Purpose: [“Promote the fiscal well-being and the quality of urban life”]:

Suggestion:

Consider modifying, to read: Promote the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational, and environmental quality of urban life so that residents of all demographic backgrounds have equal access to the opportunities that urban centers provide.

Scope of Current LWV-WI “Urban Policy”:**Suggestions:****1. Re: Current Position # 1 and Current Position # 3:****Suggestions:**

Consider modifying to combine and revise to read: The state [county, local] government should develop interrelated policies to improve urban fiscal and growth management by engaging in:

- a. “Smart” growth practices that encourage sustainability, green space allocation, urban density instead of urban sprawl, and equitable development instead of residential and cultural displacement.
- b. Investments that increase the urban center tax base.
- c. Subsidies that enable and expand affordable housing for low-income, middle-income, homeless, and senior populations, to be constructed or renovated near urban centers, workplaces, and public means

of transit. Approaches as evidenced in “housing first” initiatives, with a full range of social support mechanisms, should be encouraged and implemented.

- d. Aides and grants to localities to secure and maintain infrastructural integrity and modernization.
- e. Planning that promotes inclusive, multi-modal transit and wireless communication networks to workplaces, public schools, neighborhoods, child care centers, public libraries, and other cultural institutions such as museums, and performing centers of the arts.

2. **Re: Current Position # 2:**

Suggestions:

Consider maintaining a consistent focus on “urban” communities, corresponding to the revised document’s definition of “urban.”

This most likely would mean NOT including “distressed rural communities,” as is mentioned in the 2nd sentence on state aids; consider, then deleting the 2nd sentence.

And, since the remaining sentence, “State aids should be targeted to both declining and distressed Wisconsin communities” is currently without specifics and without definitions concerning the words “declining” and “distressed,” consider deleting the entire Current Position # 2.

3. **Re: Current Position # 4:**

Suggestions:

Consider changing to read: [Support of] policies, programs, and urban plans that:

- a. Would mitigate the complex effects of residential segregation and gentrification to promote equitable development, diversification, and revitalization of neighborhoods with ongoing neighborhood citizen input into planning processes.
- b. Would mitigate the complex effects of residential segregation to ensure equitable public educational quality through collaborative efforts with school boards, governmental officials and programs, community organizations, and neighborhood input.
- c. Would establish job training centers with direct linkages to public schools, community colleges, universities, and local employers seeking a qualified and diverse workforce.
- d. Would ensure an adequate supply of low- and middle-income housing in urban centers and neighborhoods, with proven measures to allocate affordable housing provisions in equitable development projects, including provisions for senior housing near available public means of transit.

4. **Positions in General:**

Suggestion:

Consider broadening and deepening the scope, by providing concrete parameters for study and for effective advocacy and action, and by linking some mentioned parameters to related, clearly defined positions in other sections of the LWV-WI [local League] positions document [cross-referencing].

5. **An Additional Thought Regarding Local League Approaches to Urban Policy Positions:**

Suggestion:

For any local LWV League in Wisconsin, consider having Positions that would best correspond to the size of the community for which each local LWV League in Wisconsin is responsible. [That is, for LWVDC, “urban” concerns would best apply to **Second-, Third-, and Fourth Class** cities.] Positions other than or in addition to the above suggested revisions for LWV-WI might be in play, based on the local-city’s or the area-cities’ input within each local League.