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INTRODUCTION

The Position Papers of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin are a statement and explanation of each state Program issue. The papers are intended for use as a record of state positions and as a guide for action on specific issues. Members should be aware that the record of action in this publication is a summary. A more complete record of League study and action is available in the state League office and the archives of the State Historical Society. Members should also be aware that where there has been no League activity in some areas, either there has been no activity on the subject in the legislature or League has not had enough volunteers to cover the area.

League Program consists of: a) those government issues currently under study, and b) “positions,” or the agreement reached by members in previous studies. Program must be based on the Principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States (see p.2).

League action is based on the positions agreed upon by members after study is completed. The League board at the appropriate level decides when to take official League action and determines what that action will be. Action can take many forms: community education projects, press releases, letters to editors, information sent to governmental officials, appearances at hearings in support or opposition to legislative or administrative proposals, and informal meetings with elected officials. Considerations before taking action are the effectiveness of the action, member understanding of the issue, the board's priorities, or the level of support in the community. There are times when a board may choose not to act on a position.

Since 1974, the Principles of the LWVUS, as well as the positions, may be used as authorization for actions when members are informed and in agreement on the issue.

League Program in Wisconsin exists on four levels: local, state, regional (Lake Michigan Inter-League Group) and national. However, as League Program has expanded and issues have become more complex, interrelationships between Program items and levels have emerged. Action may be based on positions in different areas. When there is a national position on an issue, it may be applied by Leagues at the state and local levels, just as state positions can sometimes be applied at the local level. Opportunities for action for local and state Leagues are especially possible under two national positions - Social Policy and Natural Resources - which tend to be "umbrella" items allowing different local and state application of national guidelines.

Some suggestions for local action are included at the end of these papers. A note of caution - if the proposed action would affect another level of League Program, or it would involve other Leagues at the same level, then clearance from the appropriate LWV Boards is required. For example, a local League in a multi-League county would need clearance from all the local League Boards in that county before taking action on a county issue. Also, all local Leagues are to consult with the state Board before taking action that would affect the state or national levels.

The state Board often applies the national positions to state issues, especially in the areas of Campaign Finance, Natural Resources and Social Policy. Those actions are recorded here as a record of state action and positions. The national positions are included in this publication only in brief, but they can be found in detail in Impact on Issues, a national publication updated regularly.

Position Papers of the LWVWI are updated periodically. Supplements are provided as positions and are added, expanded, changed or dropped between revisions.
PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open public meetings and making public records available.
- The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.
- The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

WHERE DO THE PRINCIPLES COME FROM?

The Principles are “concepts of government” to which the League subscribes. These concepts are the direct descendant of The Platform, which served the League from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for “principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention.” Since that time, the Principles have served two functions, according to the LWVUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state and local program (Article VII), and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels (Article VIII).

As for action to implement the Principles, the appropriate board authorizes action once it determines that member understanding and agreement do exist and that action is appropriate. In addition, as with other action efforts, when there are ramifications beyond a League's own governmental jurisdiction, the League should consult with other Leagues affected.

The national board suggests that any action on the Principles be taken in conjunction with present League positions to which they apply and on which any member agreement and understanding are known to exist. The Principles are rather broad when standing alone, so it is necessary to exercise a certain degree of caution when considering using them as a basis of action. Furthermore, since 1974, most of the Principles have been an integral part of the national program, most notably in the criteria for evaluating government action that appear at the end of a formal listing of program.
LWVUS PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS SUMMARY

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT
Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

Voting Rights
Citizen’s Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.


Election Process
Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance. Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public’s right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Selection of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct-popular-vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

Citizen Rights
Citizen’s Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen’s right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.
Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Congress and the Presidency
Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

Privatization
Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

United Nations
Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

Trade
Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.
U.S. Relations with Developing Countries
Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

Arms Control
Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending
Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES
Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Natural Resources
Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

Resource Management
Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control
Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources. Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management. Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Public Participation
Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

Agriculture Policy
Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

SOCIAL POLICY
Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

Equality of Opportunity

Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment and Housing. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

Fiscal Policy

Tax Policy. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is
progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

**Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.

**Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

**Health Care**
Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

**Immigration**
Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

**Meeting Basic Human Needs**
Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Income Assistance.** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

**Support Services.** Provide essential support services.

**Housing Supply.** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

**Child Care**
Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

**Early Intervention for Children at Risk**
Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

**Violence Prevention**
Support violence prevention programs in communities.

**Gun Control**
Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

**Community Policy**
Promote the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational and environmental quality of life for all residents.

**Death Penalty**
The LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty.

**Sentencing Policy**
Oppose mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. In general, alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.**
LWVWI PROGRAM SUMMARY

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE
Promote a system of justice, which assures adults and juveniles prompt and equal treatment before the law.
- Courts
- Enforcement
- Corrections
- Juveniles

CITIZEN RIGHTS
Action to protect the citizen's right to know and to facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.
- Voting Rights
- Elections
- Ballot Design
- Campaign Finance
- Public Policy on Reproductive Choices
- Gun Control

COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Promote strengthened county government.

EDUCATION
Promote equal educational opportunity for each child through an equitable state aids formula while retaining substantial program and personnel responsibilities in the local district.
- Elementary and Secondary
- Wisconsin Technical College System
- UW System Financing

GOVERNMENT FINANCING
Promote financing essential state government services by a well-administered tax system, shared revenues and improved assessment policies.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES
Promote an open government system that is representative, accountable, responsive and capable of making decisions.
- State Agencies
- Governor
- State Constitution
- Apportionment
- Boundary Adjustments
- Legislature
- Civil Service

NATURAL RESOURCES
Promote the wise management of resources in the public interest and an environment beneficial to life. Support enactment of the Midwest Interstate Compact while urging an adequate state role in safeguarding worker safety, public health and the environment as well as public participation in decision making.
- Energy
- Climate Change
- Air
- Land Use
- Solid Waste
- Water
- Transportation

SOCIAL POLICY
Promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and by combating discrimination and poverty.
- Equal rights
- Divorce Reform
- Marital Property Reform
- Meeting Basic Human Needs
- Health Care
- Domestic violence
- Mental Health
- Lending Industry Practices

COMMUNITY POLICY
Promote the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational and environmental quality of life for all residents. Recognizing that the League has a national Urban Policy position, the state League’s
Urban Policy position was updated in 2016 with the idea that Leagues across the state would use portions of the policy as they deem applicable.
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Support for a system of justice that assures adults and juveniles prompt and equal treatment before the law.

The League’s positions covering administration of justice were first adopted in 1957 and have been expanded several times since then. Extensive additions were made in the 1970's, with several reviews and updates since then. In a number of studies, many of the consensus positions focused on local communities, and since there were significant differences in communities, many local Leagues reached agreement in areas that were not shared by enough other local Leagues to reach statewide agreement. Therefore, the state Board authorized local Leagues to act on positions arrived at locally, provided that they were not in conflict with state positions.

COURTS

Support of:
Availability of judges at all times in all parts of the state to take care of judicial work without undue delay.

Adoption of a system of equal compensation for equal work and more even distribution of the workload of judges.

Reduction in the present inequities in the cost of judicial administration in different parts of the state.

Establishment of uniform rules of practice and procedure.

A requirement that all judges be licensed to practice law.

A broader base of jury selection with fewer exemptions.

In the area of pre-trial disposition of the adult defendant in the criminal process, use of a point system based on past record, family ties, employment and length of residence, to evaluate the stability of the individual, and all who qualify to be released on recognizance.

Free legal services of high quality for those in need.

The position was adopted in 1957; reviewed and reaffirmed in 1971; amended in 2013.

The League took an active role in successfully securing passage of a constitutional amendment providing for a single level trial court and an intermediate appeals court. Two other League-supported improvements were passed, providing for a Chief Judge in each of 14 administrative districts in the state and uniform rules and procedures.

The League unsuccessfully continued its support for a constitutional amendment providing for the selection of judges based on qualifications established by citizen review. The League has recommended the establishment of a citizen's advisory review board to make recommendations to the governor for judicial appointments through a merit selection process. Some governors have chosen to do this, but there has been no effort to make this method a statutory requirement.

The jury selection position was used successfully when the League supported a bill that broadened the base of jury selection by removing most exemptions and providing procedures to make jury administration more efficient.

The existing provision of legal services for the poor within the adult criminal justice system has consistently been supported by the League since the public defender program was first established. Adequate funding for the program in the state budget has been a political issue, especially in recent years.

In 2009 the League petitioned the state Supreme Court to adopt rules requiring a judge or justice to recuse him/herself from cases involving a major campaign contributor. The Court denied the League’s petition and adopted rules written by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Wisconsin Realtors Association. These rules
said that a lawfully given campaign contribution or independent expenditures would not by themselves be considered cause for recusal.

At the 2013 state annual meeting, the League removed its position on judicial selection from its positions. The old position stated support of: “A system which provides that judges be appointed on the basis of qualifications established by citizen review, and that they subsequently stand for election on their records.” This change was made following an online survey of Leagues which revealed a lack of consensus on the position.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Support of:
Law enforcement policy locally developed by cooperative efforts of citizens and law enforcement agencies using state guidelines, but reflecting local needs.

Adoption of flexible physical requirements (height and weight) to widen the recruitment base for law enforcement personnel; active recruitment of women and minorities.

Mandatory basic training within state standards for law enforcement personnel and continuing in-service training.

Lateral entry for law enforcement personnel; promotions based on ability with additional positive consideration for continuing education and training; pay incentives based on training, education, and outstanding work used to encourage job satisfaction and excellence of performance within a given rank.

Removal from the criminal statutes of non-commercial sexual behavior between consenting adults, including fornication, adultery and homosexuality. There should be no criminal penalty for possession of small amounts of marijuana for personal use. The vagrancy statute should be abolished.

This position was adopted in 1973. While the League believes the state should set standards, it also recognizes the need for flexibility. Since law enforcement policy is developed locally by agencies that reflect local needs, local Leagues may use the state position to bolster their own positions in working for such procedures as citizen review boards or mandatory human relations training of personnel. The League believes that some hiring requirements are restrictive, effectively discouraging or eliminating women and members of minorities. Community needs can best be served when police are representative of the entire population. The League has opposed efforts to relax the minimum state training standards.

Laws that prohibit widely practiced behavior usually are not enforced. The League believes this situation tends to encourage disrespect for the law. Attempts to enforce such laws are inherently unequal and may lead to questionable police practices. The vagrancy statute is an example. It represents an improper use of the criminal sanction to deal with a social problem. The League does not support the use of marijuana but believes that most prohibitive laws are unenforceable. The League seeks laws that will be uniformly enforced and that are worthy of respect. In 1983, the League worked hard for the successful passage of a bill that would remove non-commercial sexual behavior between consenting adults from the criminal statute.

**CORRECTIONAL POLICY**

Support of:
**GOALS**
The primary goal of criminal sanctions should be the protection of society through deterrence, incapacitation, and reform. Protection of society should be pursued with concern for preservation of rights of privacy and freedom of movement, due process to protect the innocent from victimization, and the prevention of inhumane punishment. Retribution should not be the primary goal of punishment. However, acts that inflict death or extreme bodily harm to others should incur some punishment even when
the protective function of society is negligible.

PUNISHMENTS
Specific punishments should be humane. Punishments regarded as inhumane and in violation of the sanctity of human life include capital punishment, infliction of severe bodily harm or mutilation, imposition of conditions shown to be destructive of mind or body, forced inactivity, isolation from human contact for prolonged periods, inadequate diet, unsanitary conditions, lack of opportunity for physical recreation, lack of prompt and adequate medical services, and lack of social services.

Specific punishments should seek to avoid criminalization. The offender should be treated like the non-offender in all regards except where inherently inconsistent with the prescribed punishment. For the prisoner, this should include access to full protection of the law in regard to alleged offenses against him or her by staff or other inmates, access to independent arbitration of disciplinary action affecting his or her disposition or freedom, free access to reading material, use of proper forms of address, and minimization of uniformity and regimentation in dress and movement. For the ex-offender, this should include restoration of civil rights, elimination of restrictions on employment except where related to criminal behavior, and elimination of restrictions on political activity.

Specific punishments should promote the offender's potential for responsible behavior in relation to family and community. This is done through encouraging maintenance of positive family ties whenever possible, maximizing opportunities for private, normal contacts with family by means of furloughs, family counseling where desired, and contacts with other members of the community concerned with providing help. It is also accomplished by providing work release opportunities when appropriate, adequate wages for prison employment and corresponding responsibility for partial maintenance of self and family while confined, opportunities for education including relevant vocational training, availability of pre-release counsel and aid in securing employment, and confinement in small institutions near urban centers and home community whenever possible.

Specific punishments should be applied equally regardless of race, religion, sex, economic or social status. This includes more minority group representation on correctional staff.

SENTENCING
General deterrence as a means of protecting society should be the primary consideration in specifying criminal penalties. The deterrent justification should be supported wherever possible by showing evidence of effectiveness. Restitution for property loss as well as reparation for bodily injury suffered by the victim of crime should be paid by the offender. Changes in the criminal justice system designed to make such sentencing feasible should be given high priority. To reduce the disparity in sentencing, classification of crimes and their penalties (reflecting differences in the seriousness of the offense) is necessary. Sentencing alternatives for offenses should be spelled out in such a classification system. Sentences should provide the offender with the maximum degree of certainty as to release date, either through absolute fixed terms or clear criteria for early release. The right to appellate review of all sentences should be assured. Pre-sentence investigation should be conducted in all felony cases. Legal services should be available at the time of the parole hearing and the offender should have the right of judicial appeal from the parole board's decision.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
Since only the state has the authority to incarcerate offenders, it is appropriate that the state own and operate these correctional facilities in Wisconsin. We oppose the use of
private correctional facilities because of issues concerning oversight, restricted access to information, quality of personnel and the inappropriateness of profit making in this area. Certain professional services, such as health care, education, rehabilitation programs, and other special services may be contracted with state oversight.

It is the state’s responsibility to own, operate and have oversight of prisons. It is the government’s role to mete out justice and to provide rehabilitation and services. Public mechanisms provide for better scrutiny than private ones. Government must ensure that treatment is humane. It is in the interest of society to rehabilitate offenders. Higher quality staff will be drawn to state institutions because of better pay.

Private prisons would require more oversight and monitoring which could be difficult. There were questions regarding training of guards and low wages. Private facilities might want only better behaved prisoners and once established may raise costs.

The profit motive of private facilities could encourage an increase rather than a reduction in prison populations, which could then become a lobby bloc. The goal of a private prison is to make money; society’s interest lies in providing treatment and services so that prisoners do not re-offend. Only a few corporations are in the prison business so there is little competition. When a private business loses a contract, it leaves an empty building that isn’t an economic benefit.

There was support for public facilities using private contractors for specific services such as health care and education.

There was support for keeping Wisconsin residents in Wisconsin facilities. It was suggested that the state have regional facilities where one region keeps prisoners.

The ability of Leaguers to see the broad picture is both a blessing and a curse. In the consensus of 2003, it was difficult for Leaguers to remember that we were creating only an update on a specific portion of our entire Administration of Justice Positions, allowing us to decide whether we would support or oppose the establishment of private correctional facilities in this state.

Most consensus comments eloquently addressed the need to reduce the prison population, to improve rehabilitation efforts, and to address current problems in the prisons. A careful reading of the Administration of Justice Positions reveals how clearly such issues are addressed, providing a basis for us to continue to take action on them.

**REHABILITATIVE TREATMENT**

Programs aimed at changing offender behavior and/or enhancing opportunities for successful re-entry into society should be available but not mandatory. Such programs should be continually re-evaluated as to effectiveness in meeting the above goals. Participation in such programs should not be a determining factor in prescribing or mitigating the sentence.

**ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION**

There is a strong need for further development and primary reliance on alternatives to incarceration except for the most dangerous offenders. Citizen education and participation should play an important role in the reintegration of the offender into the community. Use of community based treatment centers and halfway houses should be expanded. Probation services should include professional staff, each with a reasonable number of cases, use of trained volunteer aides, paraprofessionals, and wider use of community resources through purchases of services by the Department of Corrections. Unnecessary and unenforceable restrictions on behavior should be eliminated. Pre-trial intervention should be used to provide rehabilitation alternatives to a criminal record for adults who commit minor offenses, particularly first time offenders, and those whose lack of income would ordinarily doom them to jail before trial.
**LOCAL JAILS**

State government should establish minimum standards for the operation of county jails and should provide for enforcement of those standards. The state should establish minimum training requirements for jail personnel and make special training programs available to counties to enable them to meet these requirements. Funding of day-to-day jail operations should remain a local responsibility, but the state should provide assistance for training and other special programs or facilities needed to meet state requirements.

The League supports, in principle, the separation of the sheriff's department from jail administration. The latter should be under a separate director and staffed by trained civil service personnel. Consideration should be given to the practical difficulty of achieving this separation in smaller counties.

This position was first adopted in 1973. The agreement on local jails dealt with the role of the state vis a vis the county and did not deal with the content of jail standards. However, in applying this position, the League can draw upon the specific standards established in the earlier concurrence statement dealing with conditions of punishment. These standards apply equally to prisons and jails.

League action in correctional policy began soon after member agreement was reached in 1975. In almost every session bills have been introduced asking for reinstatement of the death penalty in several forms in Wisconsin. The League has continued to oppose these bills in every session.

League has sought increased state support for correctional alternatives in the community and has supported several bills designed to remove barriers to employment for the ex-offender.

Under Human Resources and Correctional Policy positions, the League, working with the Coalition for Group Homes, secured passage of a law permitting the state to suspend local zoning ordinances to allow the establishment of small group homes in areas zoned for single families. It applies to a number of groups, including the developmentally disabled, juveniles, the elderly, ex-offenders, and alcoholics.

The “Truth in Sentencing” bill, passed in 1998, effectively put an end to parole in Wisconsin by requiring a felon to stay in prison for the entire sentence set by the judge. League strongly opposed every version of the bill, including the final one, for several reasons: it ignored other approaches suggested by the Governor’s task force on sentencing and corrections, it continues the high costs from prison over-crowding, and it does not effectively improve public safety.

(See also Social Policy, Mental Health)

**JUVENILE JUSTICE**

Support of:

**GOALS**

The goal of the juvenile justice system should be to protect society through deterrence, incapacitation, and reform, as well as to protect the child whose development and welfare are in jeopardy. Punishment applied to the juvenile, like the adult, should be humane, seek to avoid criminalization, promote the juvenile's potential for responsible behavior in relation to family and community and be applied equally regardless of race, religion, sex, economic or social status. However, the age and level of responsibility of the child should be taken into consideration.

For specifics referring to "humane", "criminalization", etc., refer to the position on the adult offender.

**PREVENTION**

Priority should be given to measures which may prevent delinquency, including programs to strengthen the positive influence of the family, school and neighborhood on children's development. Prevention should include greater provision for the adolescent to act as a responsible
and contributing member of society. Programs aimed at prevention should avoid labeling children as pre-delinquent.

The League strongly encourages innovative methods of parent education, including emphasis on courses and programs for young people before they become parents. Other preventive measures which should be encouraged are providing assistance through family crisis counseling, street workers, and "hot lines"; parent participation in school and community; school alternatives to meet the needs of all children, with adequate provision for vocational preparation; neighborhood organizations and drop-in centers. Membership on school boards and other policy-forming groups is desirable. Opportunities for work and work-training programs should be available.

**DETENTION**

Detention should be restricted to necessary holding of the child rather than for punishment or treatment. Personnel, intake procedures, and facilities should be adequate to insure that the least restrictive form of temporary care required is used. Secure detention should be used for children who pose a threat to themselves or others. It should not be used for children who have run away from home or as a temporary measure when parents cannot be located.

**COURT JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURES**

Jurisdiction over the juvenile should clearly separate children who have committed criminal offenses from those who have not. Protection of the child rather than punishment should be the sole purpose of intervention when there has been no criminal offense. A court adjudication should relate to specific offenses rather than the general behavior of the child. Court jurisdiction over certain kinds of behavior that apply only to children should be limited with mechanisms for involving other agencies in resolution of the problems prior to court intervention. Included here are running away from home, truancy, curfew violations, promiscuity, and possession of alcohol. The state should assist counties in providing funding for services to help children whose behavior suggests serious problems, regardless of whether there is a court adjudication. Police should retain the authority to take a child into custody for the child's protection.

Children should be accorded all due process necessary for fairness in keeping with their best interests. There should be right to counsel in all proceedings with a system for court appointment of an attorney where families are not able to pay for services. Because of the child's vulnerability, right to counsel should be unwaivable when extreme sanctions may be invoked. Children's records and all proceedings should be confidential. However, the child, parents, and child's attorney should have access to court and police records. Restrictions should be placed on such criminalizing procedures as fingerprinting, photographing, and handcuffing. Guidelines should be established to insure a speedy trial.

With regard to the limitation of jurisdiction over certain status offenses, the League is concerned that any court action be initiated after all alternatives have been exhausted, and that such action clearly function to protect the child. "Status offenses" should be treated individually with mechanisms for handling varying with the type of behavior involved.

The criterion on "specific offense" as grounds for court jurisdiction means that the League would support removal from the statutes of "uncontrollability" and "endangering health or morals of self or others", two vaguely defined categories that now appear in the statutes.

**TREATMENT**

Diversion from the system should be encouraged, with clear policy guidelines established between the police, schools, courts and other agencies to which youth
may be referred. The "least restrictive means" criterion should be applied to all dispositional judgments, and resources should be available to enable this. Dispositional alternatives available to the juvenile court judge should include restitution to the victim and public service to the community. There should be periodic review of dispositions to insure treatment is being provided, that it is still necessary and that there is continuity between agencies.

A variety of resources should be available to insure least restrictive treatment and may differ according to the size and nature of the community. Extremely important is the provision of an adequate number of group homes and foster homes. Community treatment facilities, walk-in crisis centers and shelter facilities are also important. Other programs that may be encouraged are alternative schools, jobs, use of volunteers - in probation, such as big brothers/sisters, as teen companions - programs for children with special needs.

**ADMINISTRATION**

Standards and procedures for the administration of the juvenile justice system should be formulated and enforced by the state to insure that children in all parts of the state receive fair treatment and equal access to services. However, administration should remain with local units of government. Uniform and adequate records should be kept for both planning and evaluation purposes. Specialized training should be encouraged for all personnel who play significant roles in the juvenile justice system. There should be continued evaluation of treatment programs, correctional institutions, private treatment centers, and all types of innovative alternatives.

Enforcement of state standards implies that there be penalties for non-compliance. These might take the form of withholding of funds or licensing or the possibility of reverting to state control. Evaluation of programs is interpreted to mean evaluation by someone other than the provider of the service.

These positions were first adopted in 1975 and were reviewed and reaffirmed in 1991. A major reform of the juvenile justice system, which the League supported with a major effort, was accomplished in 1978. The revision specified procedures for due process in the juvenile court and modified some of the court procedures. It limited the use of secure detention and placed increased responsibility with the court for all major decisions regarding juveniles. It encouraged alternatives for disposition and temporary placement of juveniles.

The League strongly supported the Youth and Family Aids (YFA) program, which provides funds to help counties to establish and use local correctional means (group homes, foster homes, supervisory services). Since counties were given a lump sum for all corrections, whether at a state-run institution or at a local alternative facility, there is a financial incentive to use the least restrictive criterion to keep juveniles in the community. The League has continued to support adequate funding for this program. Local Leagues are encouraged to review how YFA funds are used in their counties.

The latter part of the 1980's saw a move by some legislators to make the Children's Code much more restrictive. The League gave qualified support to the extended jurisdiction bill in 1989, which extended court jurisdiction until the age of 21 or 25 of 14 or 15 year olds who commit serious crimes.

In 1995, supervision of juvenile delinquents was moved to the Department of Corrections from the Department of Health and Social Services. League opposed the move because services to juveniles in the court system are closely integrated with other services to children.

Other recent revisions in the juvenile code have made it more punitive and have blurred the distinction between juveniles and adults. The League has opposed most of these
changes. They include: lowering the age of delinquency from 12 to 10; making 17 year olds subject to the adult court; waiving juveniles to adult court at a younger age; allowing secure detention in county facilities as an appropriate disposition for juvenile offenses; and the elimination of jury trials for juveniles. League also opposed involving truancy in the court system.

The League did support new alternative dispositions available to the court.

CITIZENS’ RIGHTS

Based on national guidelines, 1971 and 1972: Action to protect the citizen's right to know, to facilitate citizen participation in government and to oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTIES

Support of the following:
The individual liberties guaranteed by the Wisconsin Constitution. The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Wisconsin Constitution should not be weakened or abridged. (This position paraphrases the position on Individual Liberties of the LWVUS in reference to the U.S. Constitution.)

The right and responsibility of individuals and groups to oppose by any non-violent means government actions that weaken or abridge the individual rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Wisconsin Constitution.

The responsibility of state and local government officials to uphold their oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution and Wisconsin Constitution by protecting the individual rights of their constituents in the face of federal laws and executive orders that weaken or abridge them.

At its 2003 Convention, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin adopted a study of “The Role of State and Local Governments of Wisconsin in protecting individual liberties, including the USA Patriot Act”.

The study was a response to federal legislation and executive orders and regulations after the attack of 9/11/01 that were judged by the LWVUS and local Leagues in Wisconsin to weaken and abridge constitutionally guaranteed individual rights. Leagues recognized that security is a major function of government, but that in times of crisis governments tend to go to excesses which infringe on the equally important protection of constitutionally guaranteed liberties. The LWVUS position on individual liberties adequately covers advocacy at the national level of government. The goal of taking a state consensus was to empower Wisconsin state and local Leagues to advocate for action to protect individual liberties on the state and local levels of government. Consensus was taken in the spring of 2004, returning a clear consensus supporting the following position. The new position on Individual Liberties was adopted by the Board of the LWVWI in May.

VOTING RIGHTS

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Wisconsin election laws should provide citizens with maximum opportunity for registration, voting at the polls, and absentee voting. Election administration should be adequately coordinated and funded to achieve both statewide standards uniformly applied and local municipal effectiveness.

Regarding Voter Registration, we support:
- Convenient hours and places for registration
- Provision for well trained statewide special deputy registrars
- An accurate statewide voter registration list that is adequately maintained and protected from undue deletions
- Eligibility requirements applied uniformly to all electors
- Wisconsin’s successful Election Day registration to be preserved
- A variety of eligible proofs of identification and of current address to be retained

Regarding Voting, we support:
- Poll workers who are adequately recruited, trained and remunerated
- No photo ID or other requirements that place undue burden on the voter or erect barriers to voter participation
- Restoration of the voting rights of felons who are not currently incarcerated
- Provisions for observers at the polls
- Public observation of tabulation of votes
- Provisional ballots and well-defined redress of grievance procedures
- Protection against fraud at the polls

Regarding Absentee Ballots, we support:
- Broad availability of absentee ballots with no excuse needed to obtain a ballot
- Ease of obtaining and executing absentee ballots including adequate timing for voters to exercise their right to vote and election officials to process the ballots.

Regarding Election Administration, we support:
- A Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) that is adequately funded to allow municipal and county clerks to do their jobs without additional undue financial burden
- A system of early voting primarily for presidential primary, presidential and gubernatorial elections that provides for the early ballots to be entered into the machine for validation but with no tallying until Election Day. The system should include security measures for the machines and a time frame that provides ample time for poll lists to be updated by Election Day. Multiple sites should be allowed at the discretion of the municipalities.

- HAVA (Help America Vote Act)-required matching of the SVRS with other state data lists should be done only for the purpose of improving the quality of the SVRS lists and not to determine voter eligibility.

The Wisconsin League has based its voting rights action on the League principle that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote and on the specific positions above, reflecting member convictions that protecting the right to vote is indivisibly part of the League's basic purpose. League's voting rights actions have been taken not only to ensure access to the electoral process but to extend and enhance that process and the government's role therein.

In 1977-78 the legislature enacted major election law changes, which the League supported. These included: the establishment of registration at the polls; the option for students to designate their student address as their place of residence for voting purposes; repeal of the 6 month residency requirement; and the requirement that all communities have voter registration.

There have been many proposals for change in election laws, some of which were enacted. Because they would not necessarily make the legislature more responsive to the voters, the League has supported a number of these, opposed a few and has watched them all. The following is a summary.

Changes enacted that were supported by the League:
1) 1st Tuesday in January deadline for filing nomination papers for spring elections in order to leave enough time for voting by absentee ballot, 1979.
2) Authorization for special registration deputies and additional officials at the polls, 1978.
5) Automatic sending of absentee ballots to registered voters confined indefinitely to a home or institution, 1978.
6) Constitutional amendment requiring primaries in recall elections as in regular elections, 1981.

7) Referendum questions worded so that a positive vote means approval and a negative vote means disapproval, 1986.

8) All polling places accessible to persons in wheel chairs by 1982, 1986.

9) Where voting machines are used there must be a notice informing voters that a separate ballot must be cast (lever pulled) for president/vice president and another for all other candidates rather than just one vote for the straight party ticket, 1986.


The 1989-90 legislature enacted an omnibus bill on election laws. It was supported by the League because of its improvements in election law. The changes included giving military spouses and dependents the same voting privileges as military electors, special absentee voting provisions, tightening of recall petition procedures, restricting use of stickers in voting, increased authority of election inspectors and so forth. The League did question the provision that gives the Elections Board authority to exempt a polling place from the handicapped accessibility requirement and reassigning the voter to another polling place. League believed that it might result in unnecessary and extended difficulty for some handicapped people to vote.

In the past several years, the League has been instrumental in protecting our voting rights and helping defeat proposals that would make voting more difficult or disenfranchise some citizens. The League, in cooperation with a Voting Rights Coalition that has formed, testified against and supported the Governor’s repeated veto of the bill that would require a state-issued photo id to vote (2005, 2006). LWV-WI also testified against a bill that would end Election Day registration (2006) and that bill was not brought to the floor for a vote.

The League has successfully opposed various bills introduced in almost every session to repeal the mandatory provision for registration availability in high schools and to repeal the requirement for registration at polling places.

In 1991 we opposed attempts to change the dates of spring elections and related deadlines for the sole purpose of favorably affecting the date of Wisconsin's presidential preference primary and its role in the presidential nomination process. Our concerns have been that spring elections are scheduled when best suited for Wisconsin and thus that polling days do not occur when the winter weather is more likely and that nomination paper filing dates are not any more affected by the holiday season than at present.

In 1992 we opposed term limitations because we believe that limits deny voters the right to choose those they want to represent them.

Other bills we acted on: support for impartial captions on referenda on the ballot (1991); concerns about filing date changes in “open seat” contests (1993).

Election problems in the close 2000 and 2004 presidential races increased worries of voter fraud. Though multiple studies revealed voter fraud to be overwhelmingly minimal and rarely intentional, the League went on the defense to protect an individual’s right to vote without the undue barriers of providing a state-issued, photo identification card with current address.

In 2002, the federal government passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which required, among other things, that states produce and use a statewide, electronic voter registration database by the Fall 2006 mid-term elections. The League monitored the database implementation process and advocated that the required process of matching voter registration records to other government databases (i.e., social security and Department of Motor Vehicles records) not put any voter in jeopardy of being inappropriately dropped from the registration list. During this time, the Wisconsin State Elections Board also purchased new electronic voting machines and the state League advocated for a paper voting
record using the newly adopted LWVUS position on fair voting machine technology.

In the 2005-2006 session, the League successfully supported a bill with sweeping administrative changes intended in large part to comply with HAVA. Specific provisions the League supported included: authorizing municipalities to establish alternate absentee ballot voting sites in lieu of the clerk’s office; extending prohibitions against electioneering to include the clerk’s office and/or absentee voting site; requiring all municipal clerks to receive election training at least once every two years; requiring clerks to train all poll workers other than chief inspectors, who continue to be trained and certified under current law, as well as special registration deputies and special voting deputies pursuant to rules developed by the elections board. The League also expressed concerns about some aspects of the bill, all of which passed, including: the lack of a provision for removing the felon designation from a person’s name on the statewide voter registration list when his/her voting rights are restored; a requirement that a person registering to vote at the poll to affirm publicly her/his felon status; moving the deadline for pre-registration from the 2nd Wednesday preceding the election to the 3rd Wednesday preceding the election; an exemption from requiring the clerk to appoint special registration deputies; the lack of appropriation for training requirements; a requirement that students who use identification to register which does not contain their local address receive a certification from their educational institution. The League also noted that we believe all absentee ballots should be counted on election day.

In the January 2007 Special Session of the Legislature, the League was influential in the passage of a major government reform measure, which combined the Wisconsin State Elections Board and the Wisconsin Ethics Board into a new Government Accountability Board with an Enforcement Division. While Elections Board members were appointed by the Governor, the new Government Accountability Board members will be retired judges nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Government Accountability Board was given power and a budget with which to investigate and prosecute elections, ethics and lobbying violations.

The League initially supported this reform legislation, but withdrew support when major flaws were revealed. Last-minute amendments made the legislation workable and the League applauded its passage.

In June 2005, Convention delegates approved a two-year study of Voting Rights. In June 2007, Convention delegates approved a two-year extension of the study to cover all aspects of election administration. This resulted in the revised position (above) which was approved by delegates of the May 2009 Annual Meeting.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Based on the specific campaign finance positions as adopted by the LWVUS in 1974, the Wisconsin League has had many opportunities to act in the area of campaign finance reform. The issues, proposals and solutions are very similar at the state level and the positions have been and remain timely.

In 1974 the State Elections Board was created and modern campaign finance regulation got its start in Wisconsin. In 1977 the legislature established a 45% limit on combined PAC funds and public grants as a percentage of spending limits. Thus, this means that a candidate who takes a full public grant cannot take any PAC money. The Wisconsin Election Campaign Fund was established to provide partial public funding for state elections through a check-off on the income tax form. Also in these years legislation was enacted which created contribution limits, spending limits when public funding is used, full disclosure and reporting requirements, and threshold contribution and minimum vote level to qualify for public funds. The League strongly supported all of this and has worked since then to maintain and improve the system.
Several times we have successfully opposed legislation which would have replaced the income tax check-off with an add-on, meaning we would no longer have had public funding. We also opposed attempts to: 1) repeal special reporting of large contributions in the final two weeks; 2) raise the threshold level at which registration and reporting begins (this was done in 1986); 3) raise the amount of personal funds a candidate can spend without reporting (this level was raised from $100 to $1,000 in 1986).

Many good changes have been made in the campaign finance system with our support:
1) Public financing has been extended to special elections;
2) Conduits must register with the state and report contributions passed through to candidates;
3) Committees which spend independently (without the knowledge or cooperation of the candidate) must specifically report any disbursements of more than $20 within the last 10 days before an election;
4) Tax forms now inform the tax filer that checking off does not increase liability;
5) There is a provision for voluntary unrestricted contributions to the Wisconsin Elections Campaign Fund;
6) $1 will be transferred to the fund for taxpayers whose liability is less than $1 or who have a refund;
7) Legislative and party campaign committees cannot spend independently without registering as a PAC; this imposes lower limits on a committee's direct contributions to candidates;
8) Candidates do not need to limit spending even if receiving a grant if the opponent does not accept a grant, unless the opponent voluntarily agrees to accept the spending limit;
9) A candidate must return grant money (in order to accept PAC money) more than three weeks before the election, so that this action will be reported before the election.

The League supported a number of bills which did not pass. One bill would have increased the check-off to $2 to maintain the level of the fund. We also supported a proposal allowing the Elections Board to set aside 3% of the election fund be used for public information about the purpose and effect of the fund. Other provisions we supported would:
1) Exempt a candidates' travel expenses from spending limits, if paid for by committee;
2) Prohibit a candidate from withdrawing voluntary acceptance of spending limits later than a week after the primary;
3) Subject the costs of all thank you ads to campaign finance limitations;
4) Establish a sliding scale which would allow primary survivors in state elections a portion of the grant beginning with 20% for those who receive 1% of the vote;
5) Provide state funding for U.S. campaigns.

One major proposal, which the League supports, is a call for passage of a constitutional amendment to both the federal and state constitutions to allow campaign-spending limits. We believe that this is a necessary component for any lasting solution to campaign finance excesses and abuses.

In 1991-92 League continued to lobby for these and other changes, many of which were included in the Legislative Council bill in 1993. This proposal has been reintroduced in every session, but has never been passed.

In 1997, the League was generally critical of the report of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Campaign Finance Reform because of its failure to recommend comprehensive reform including: a sure source of enough public funding; control of spending levels; lowering contribution levels and other provisions. The League did support prompt electronic filing of contributions and reports by all candidates; requiring out-of-state organizations with campaign activity in Wisconsin to abide by Wisconsin laws; limiting PAC-to PAC and Campaign-to-campaign contributions; counting money left over from one campaign against the spending limit to the next.

League also urged other provisions, not included in the Commission report: adequate enforcement of election laws through prompt review of complaints and increase in fines;
increasing the income tax check-off and allowing a small portion to be used for public education about the role of the funds in financing campaigns.

One of the commission’s recommendations was enacted. Candidates could voluntarily file financial reports electronically in the 1998 elections, but are required to do so after January 1, 1999.

In 1996, the League joined the coalition, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, to intensify the educational, organizing and lobbying efforts for campaign reform, and to closely monitor elections until such time as legislation passed. In 1998, the coalition has publicized the sources of funds and their expenditure in the most expensive campaigns Wisconsin has seen.

BALLE DESIGN

Support for
- proven principles of good ballot design developed by the American institute of Graphic Arts and endorsed by the Federal Election Commission to produce a ballot that is functional and maximizes legibility, comprehension, ease of use, accuracy, neutrality, efficiency and voter confidence. The elements of good ballot design use fonts, justification, placement, shading and other graphic devices to help voters understand, navigate and complete the ballot.
- adequate financing of the Governmental Accountability Board/elections oversight body to maintain and expand statewide initiatives to improve ballot design.
- intergovernmental cooperation to efficiently implement ballot design improvements and to minimize design variability.

The position was adopted statewide by concurrence at the LWVWI Annual Meeting in Appleton, May 31, 2014.

Late in 2012, several members of the LWVMC began to examine several 2012 Milwaukee County municipal ballots. In January 2013, the LWVMC board of directors approved formation of the ad hoc Ballot Design Committee. To address ballot design concerns the committee referred to Design for Democracy: Ballot and Election Design by Marcia Lausen, an initiative of the American Institute of Graphic Arts endorsed by the Federal Election Commission. The committee also discussed determinants of ballot design, including governance of design and constraints imposed by voting machines. The committee then met with Milwaukee County Election Commission personnel in the fall of 2013 and Wisconsin’s GAB in early 2014 to discuss outstanding questions.

In discussion with Milwaukee County Election Commission personnel in fall of 2013, the ad hoc Ballot Design Committee learned about a decrease in Commission personnel and at least six types of aging voting machines in use in the County that require design of many different ballots – and significant personnel time. Cooperation among all municipalities in a county to purchase the same equipment would require fewer ballot design types, fewer technology programs for ballot design, and fewer personnel hours consumed for ballot design by County Election Commission and evaluation by GAB personnel.

Discussion with the GAB in early 2014 revealed that the State budget now in process does not include funds to replace Help America Vote Act dollars that support election administration and oversight, including ballot design. Twenty-six positions are currently supported by those funds. The Legislative Audit Bureau is currently auditing the GAB.

On checking the PEW Charitable Trust website, the committee also learned that the growing use of absentee ballots and the high absentee ballot rejection rates in a few communities make good ballot design an increasingly critical concern. Well-designed
ballots lessen the possibility of voter errors. Without the ability to seek clarification from poll workers or the ‘safety net’ of having a voting machine catch a fatal error in marking the ballot, absentee voters can be unknowingly disenfranchised when a simple error results in a rejected ballot. The new position was adopted through concurrence at the 2014 Annual Meeting.

**RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES**

*Action to protect constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.*

In 1983 Wisconsin Leagues concurred with Leagues across the nation in support of a national position to allow action to protect the individual's constitutional right to privacy in reproductive matters. This right had been guaranteed by the 1973 Supreme Court decision in the Roe vs. Wade case. The decision prohibits states from restricting the right to abortion during the first trimester, allows regulation to protect health and safety during the second and permits prohibition during the third trimester except to save the life or health of a pregnant woman.

Occasions for action came very quickly and continue to the present time. In taking action the League has worked cooperatively with the Reproductive Rights Task Force of the Wisconsin Women’s Network. For the most part, action has been successful in maintaining the legal right to choose. Although anti-choice activists have failed to get abortion banned, they have had considerable success in gaining separate restrictions one at a time.

League has opposed all four major restrictions enacted into law. The first restriction denies the use of public funds to pay for abortions. Because most hospitals receive public funds, they have been unable to provide abortion services to Medicaid patients, who must now seek private funding. League has supported a number of bills in unsuccessful attempts to restore this funding.

The second restriction, passed in 1992, requires consent of an adult for a minor to have an abortion. The original bill called for “parental consent,” but we were able to get modification to allow consent to be given by a close family member, a member of the clergy, or the court and to provide for anonymity. The League holds that the majority of teens do tell their parents, but for those who, for whatever reason, cannot talk to their parents, and who will be responsible for a child for 18 years if abortion is not available, the right of personal choice should not be restricted.

In 1985 a law was enacted containing a number of provisions intended to reduce the number of abortions. It should be noted that while the League supports the right to choose abortion, it also supports programs to reduce teen pregnancies under Social Policy positions. These positions combined with the reproductive rights position allowed the League support the bill that became law.

In 1996 the third major restriction was adopted, requiring a 24-hour waiting period between the first consultation and the actual procedure. The law also requires the doctor to provide state-prepared information about all aspects of the procedure and all options open to the client if the pregnancy were to continue. League opposition was based on the lack of accessibility of clinics in most parts of the state, causing many clients undue problems of cost, time, transportation, and confidentiality. Objection to the “informed consent” requirement was on the grounds of state interference with a doctor’s practice. The concerns of pro-choice advocates that the information required provide unbiased content resulted in very comprehensive, medically accurate materials.

Last of the four major restrictions was enacted in 1997. The term “partial birth abortion” was designed to shock the public to gain support for anti-abortion legislation. The term is not used by the medical community; it implies that a healthy, viable fetus is aborted at the request of pregnant woman. Under Roe vs. Wade and Wisconsin law, third trimester abortion is illegal unless the life and health of the woman
is at stake. If the fetus is healthy and viable, the doctor would choose to induce live birth. If the fetus is not healthy, the doctor might choose this procedure as the best means of protecting a woman’s ability to conceive in the future.

Although the bill became law, a suit in federal court contests its constitutionality. The U.S. 7th District Court of Appeals in November 1998 enjoined enforcement until trial determines its constitutionality.

The 1989 U.S. Supreme Court's Webster vs. Missouri decision, giving states more authority to limit the right to abortion if the restrictions did not place an “undue burden” on the woman, stimulated a number of bills.

The League continues to work for bills to remove Wisconsin’s existing criminal sanctions for performing an abortion, none of which have passed. Thus the law remains in place if the Supreme Court should overturn Roe vs. Wade.

The League has supported with some small success efforts to prevent opponents from blocking access to abortion services although picketing and demonstrations are still allowed.

Abortion opponents wanted the durable power of attorney for health care law to exempt pregnant women. In a compromise supported by the League, a bill passed containing a legal form for a “durable power of attorney” for health care, with a checklist to be marked if the appointed attorney is to have the power to make decisions for a woman who is pregnant. Other conditions also require check-off.

In 1989 League joined other groups objecting to the action of the state attorney general in signing for Wisconsin an amicus curiae brief to the U.S. Supreme court that urged the overturn of the Roe vs. Wade decision. League argued that Wisconsin has taken no such position either legislatively or by citizen vote.

League has also opposed a number of bills which have sought to define the fetus as an “unborn child” in order to establish a legal status for a fetus, as well as bills that create some 20 penalties for intended or unintended injury or death to an “unborn” child. We have opposed another bill which prohibits use of public funds or use if public facilities to programs which provide information on abortion, and prohibit public employees from taking part in such programs.

Another bill would confine pregnant women with drug dependencies to treatment centers, opposed because of denial of personal freedom and because such facilities are not available in most places. An effort to permit pharmacists to refuse to provide prescriptions on the basis of their own beliefs has been opposed because it would deny contraceptives and abortifacients and anything else to customers. A bill that would protect doctor from being sued for failing to inform a pregnant woman about the condition of the fetus in time for an abortion was also opposed.

None of these latter bills has passed, but they and others seeking new restrictions are sure to be introduced in the future.

(For other action affecting women, see Social Policy.)

**GUN CONTROL**

State action on gun control is based on national position, adopted in 1992 and found in Impact on Issues, 1998-2000. Using these positions, the League first lobbied in 1992 for safety education and hand gun control laws, regulating ownership, establishing a waiting period for the purchase of guns, and licensing ownership with annual renewal.

In 1995, League vigorously but unsuccessfully opposed a bill preempting the right of local communities to pass gun control laws which were more stringent that the laws of the state. We supported a bill requiring trigger locks on hand guns, and a bill which would prohibit an abuser or harasser from buying a gun while under a restraining order.

In the 1997-98 session, a constitutional amendment was passed which would add a clause guaranteeing the right to bear arms.
League opposed the amendment because the federal constitution already guarantees this right, and because it causes confusion for police officers in enforcing the law. However, because of the great public support for the amendment, League decided not to waste resources and limited its action to education on the issue in the ensuing referendum. The amendment passed by a large majority in 1998.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Support for strengthened county government.

League study of county government began in the 1920's and has focused on strengthened and improved county government. A study in 1959-61 resulted in the adoption of the first group of positions. A study of state-local relationships in 1967 resulted in the adoption of the second group of positions. Action has been possible for local Leagues as well as the state League under these positions.

Support of:

Improvements in county government through variances in organization to meet differing needs; county boards apportioned by population; establishment of an executive or an administrator; short ballot.

Placement of primary reliance for performing services and handling revenue on a strengthened and improved county government structure.

Transfer of functions from town to county level; establishment and enforcement of minimum legal requirements for the continued existence of towns.

Wisconsin's 72 counties differ widely in size, population and rural or urban character. In 1972 the League supported the constitutional amendment to remove the uniformity requirement for counties and a follow-up bill giving counties limited organizational home rule powers. County boards could begin to organize departments and agencies to respond to each county's particular needs. Over the years, however, a series of Attorney General's opinions interpreted this limited home rule narrowly and counties actually gained little flexibility from the change.

The League conducted a vigorous campaign opposing an amendment which would remove the uniformity clause for towns and to allow them home rule. The referendum failed by a wide margin. League opposition to home rule for towns is based on the position favoring strengthened and improved county government. The League believes county government is the ideal taxing and servicing unit and that towns were never meant to provide urban services or govern urban areas.

League supported important changes in county administration in 1985-87 that were designed to provide organizational and administrative flexibility to county government and to ensure greater accountability. Counties were given a statutory grant to administrative home rule to allow flexibility and local control to address these needs. The bill did not grant functional home rule, that enjoyed by cities and villages, which would allow the unit of government to create or change its programs and activities.

Counties continue to deliver services mandated by the legislature. County administration and management gained additional power aimed at eliminating problems of diffused authority and promoting accountability including budget development and control.

League questioned whether a statutory grant of home rule should come before a constitutional grant is realized in the amendment process. The League expressed concern that the change in the role of the independent boards and commissions from policy-making and implementation to advisory status could diminish the opportunity for citizen advocacy to ensure adequate services. The League agreed with the rationale for the reform but regretted that improved assessment policies and boundary review which would address some of these problems were not part of the bill.

After the LWVWI position favoring smaller county boards apportioned by population was reached, legislation was supported which classified counties by size and set a maximum number of board members for each class. The court directed that county board representatives be apportioned on the basis of population.

The position supporting the establishment of an executive or an administrator reflects the
agreement of League members that varying kinds of county government will be strengthened by different types of leadership. League supported the 1985-87 budget bill which provided that a county board by ordinance can select the administrative model that best suits its needs and population. A local League could determine whether an executive or administrator would be a better choice for its county and a number of local Leagues successfully supported establishment of an executive or an administrative system.

Support for the short ballot followed League agreement in 1961 that administrative offices (such as County Clerk, County Treasurer, County Register of Deeds, Sheriff or Clerk of the Circuit Court) should be filled by appointment and that only policy-making officers should be elected. The majority of Leagues indicated that they would keep the district attorney on the ballot because the office is a policy-making one. The League continued to support measures to amend the state constitution to remove the requirement that county officers, other than the supervisors, the district attorney, and chief executive officers be elected. (In later studies, League supported appointment procedures for county judicial offices. See Administration of Justice).

The League does not have positions on the appropriate authority for appointment, removal or filling of vacancies in other offices nor on the transfer of powers and duties to an appointive officer. No proposal has come before the legislature which would remove administrative offices from the ballot. However, the office of district attorney has been made a 4-year term, causing the ballot to be shorter in some years. The constitutional amendment to make the office of sheriff a four-year term was approved in the fall of 1998. League did not take any action on the referendum.

In the position reached in 1969, League agreed that the county could better perform some functions of town government. County responsibility for the construction and maintenance of highways was the strongest recommendation. League members also favored establishing and enforcing legal requirements for the continued existence of a town and opposed additional measures which would weaken county government by giving more power to towns. It has opposed relaxing incorporation standards for towns and has opposed allowing towns to withdraw from county zoning. The League has supported and continues to support basic reform of the state's boundary adjustment law.

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS

Support of policies of flexible boundary adjustments that make the welfare of the area as a whole the primary consideration, including a permanent boundary commission with sufficient power to implement its decisions.

The League supports flexible boundary revision processes which will be responsive to the changing communities. As a result of the "territorial wars" of the fifties - that is, rapid expansion by cities and frantic incorporation by suburban areas to avert annexation by cities - annexation, incorporation, and consolidation laws were drastically changed by the legislature. It became obvious during the 1950s that the traditional methods were not producing a sensible growth pattern. Current laws had led to a situation in which boundaries are either irregular or inflexible.

In response to this problem, the legislature instituted judicial and state planning review of proposed alterations in boundaries, while retaining the referendum procedures of the previous law.

Municipalities are often unable to deal effectively with problems that do not respect political lines and, as urban sprawl increases, cities and their adjacent towns are in conflict, working side by side but seldom hand in hand. In 1973 League supported legislation to permit annexation of town islands without the approval of the town. The final bill limited the island to 65 acres and less than 100 people. It was a small but significant victory in the very big area of boundary policies. This victory was challenged in 1975 with a proposed
amendment which would have allowed creation of new town islands in annexation proceedings. The League opposed the bill and urged the legislature to consider boundary review as a necessary basic need for dealing with municipal boundary adjustments.

Attempts to weaken the town island law continued in 1976 when a proposal would have repealed the provision that no city or village could create a town area surrounded by the city or village. The League opposed the bill and the measure failed. The League opposed legislation in 1975 that would have allowed town incorporation solely by referendum of town residents without having to meet standards or undergo judicial or administrative review. The bill failed to pass.

The League was successful in a related area in 1978 when it opposed a bill which would have allowed towns over 1200 to incorporate as 3rd or 4th class cities merely by petition and referendum approval, rather than meeting the required standards for such incorporation or undergoing judicial or administrative review. With many towns becoming larger than 4th class cities, pressure for such legislation continued.

In 1984 the League supported repeal of the "Oak Creek Law," which allows a town immediately adjacent to a city of the 1st class to incorporate upon petition and referendum if it has a resident population of 5,000 and an assessed valuation of $20 million. Support for repeal was based on the inadequate standards, i.e., no review using the statutory standards nor by the court. The bill failed. Subsequent legislation has determined that, even when all qualifying conditions are met, a city is not automatically reclassified until it opts for a new status.

Beginning in 1969 League supported some form of state boundary review commission with sufficient powers to implement its decisions based on the welfare of the entire area. The League routinely supported a bill to revamp Wisconsin's laws on annexation, incorporation and consolidation and to establish a Boundary Review commission to bring equity and objectivity to boundary adjustments through a state level impartial review. In the 1977-79 session, the League supported legislation to create a five-member boundary review board at the county level with a state boundary review board to hear appeals. In spite of this effort to put responsibility for boundary adjustments at the local level, the bill failed.

Failure to pass a boundary review bill means that the border wars continue. The 1990's found problems in urban sprawl areas increasing demands upon public services already strained by tight budgets. Chaotic growth patterns continue to sharpen urban-rural conflicts. The state's public policy response to urban growth has been inadequate or at worst, totally lacking.

In 1990 the League supported a resolution calling for a Legislative Council study of procedures by which a town may become a village or city (incorporation and consolidation) and the procedures for annexation of unincorporated territory. The resolution did not pass. However, the Legislative Council established a Special Committee on Municipal Boundary and Related Issues to report to the Legislature by January 1991. No action was taken on the Council's report.

The League continues to oppose town home rule and measures to strengthen town government. It continues to support measures to strengthen and improve county government, believing that the county is a unit of government capable of assuming many service needs of urbanizing areas.

In the 1997 budget session, League pleaded for a municipal boundary review mechanism particularly to resolve land use disputes.

(For action on other bills relating to towns and county government, see Government Financing, Assessments)
EDUCATION

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Promote equal educational opportunity for each child through an equitable state aids formula while retaining substantial program and personnel responsibilities in the local district.

Since 1927 the League has been active in studying and promoting improvement of the elementary and secondary system of public education in the state. League positions on education were reaffirmed and expanded in 1971, 1989, 2002 and 2005.

Support of a system of state elementary and secondary education which includes:

An educational aids formula which primarily equalizes funds raised at similar taxing rates and, secondarily, equalizes spending per student, with the following qualifications:

- a system of financing which ensures that a child's opportunity for a good education is not limited by the fiscal ability of the local district and that the state will assume a significant amount of educational financing.
- a system of financing which promotes equality in educational opportunity with emphasis on instructional costs and adjusted funding for students with special educational needs.

Reorganization of school districts into K-12 systems.

Substantial control of school programs and personnel by the local school district.

Charter school authority given only to K-12 public school districts to maintain Wisconsin's commitment to local control of K-12 public education.

A system of school choice within the public school system, but which does not include any tax dollars being given to private or religious schools.

A requirement of all institutions or organizations that receive public funds for K-12 education to meet the same requirements as public schools, including:

- accounting for the use of public funds;
- meeting performance standards for their students;
- meeting the same state standards for all school employees.

The League’s position on reorganization of all school districts into kindergarten through 12th grade systems has virtually been achieved. By 1975, the legislature had mandated that all territory in the state must be part of a high school district. In 1997, there were 426 school districts, of which 367 were K-12 systems and 48 were elementary systems feeding into 10 union high school districts. Because of sparse populations, the long distances involved and the desire for local control, it is unlikely that the 48 elementary systems and the 10 union high schools will be organized in full K-12 systems.

The local control position resulted from a study of educational financing in 1972-73. League members indicated that although they support the right of each child to a quality education, this does not mean that all school districts must provide the same kinds of course offerings. Although members agree to the need for state standards, they believe that each school district should have considerable control over local programs and personnel.

Since 1947, the League has supported a school aids formula which would equalize the financial resources of school districts. In the 1972-73 study, League members rejected the idea that the state should take over complete financing of elementary and secondary education. In large measure this was because they feared the concomitant loss of local control, although they believed that the state should bear a significant cost of school financing, recognizing that the property wealth of a local district or lack of it should not be a limiting factor in a child's education. League has continued to support an equalization
formula which ensures that equal tax effort would yield equal revenue.

In 1976 the League joined the state as amicus curiae (friend of the court) in the case which was heard in the state supreme court, claiming the "negative aids" formula, which required that those property-rich districts who could afford to tax themselves at a low rate and spend at a high level would be required to contribute part of their revenues to the general aid fund to assist other districts where property values were low. The court disagreed with the League position and declared the formula unconstitutional.

The 1973 legislature imposed direct cost controls on school district budgets to ensure property tax relief to taxpayers and to hold down shared costs. Through a referendum, a local district could approve higher spending.

Minimum educational standards were established, mandating employment of licensed or certified staff, minimum legal salary payment and fringe benefits for teachers, provision of in-service training, remedial reading programs in K-3, operation of a kindergarten program, and special education programs. The employee's share of teachers' retirement fund and social security was transferred from the state to the local school district. The principal and interest on long-term indebtedness and annual capital outlay up to $100 per pupil were included in the state's cost sharing formula.

The 1985-87 state budget contained a wide variety of proposals affecting education, including increased support for categorical programs; establishing academic excellence through curriculum planning, testing and course offering requirements; improving staff performance through new requirements and incentive; providing special help for children at risk; and increasing equalization in the distribution equalization aids.

In 1993, a number of major changes occurred. The state undertook to pay 2/3 of school costs and instituted revenue caps, limiting how much a school district could increase its total revenues each year. A local referendum is required to raise local property taxes. To keep spending within the revenue limits, the state established the Qualified Economic Offer (QEO) in determining employee compensation. If negotiations between employees break down, a QEO may be offered, making binding arbitration no longer available. A QEO is a proposal for salary and fringe benefits which is no more than a 3.8% increase.

Statewide testing of students in several grades was instituted.

In 1997, member agreement allowed League to strongly oppose the proposal to provide school vouchers for families to use to pay for private and religious schools, because it diverts tax money from the public school system to private use.

An education committee formed in 2002 suggested changes in our education position. Since 1993 the state has assumed responsibility for 2/3 of the cost of public education and has imposed revenue limits. This has created even greater disparities in per pupil spending. The updated position approved in 2003 focuses attention on program equity between urban and rural districts. In addition, the language defining districts into K-12 systems was eliminated, since public education now provides services to children as young as 3 years old.

The Leagues’ position on reorganization of school districts into K-12 systems, which was achieved in the early 1970’s, was also updated to include cost effective educational equity. For example, in 2002, over 75% of the districts had less than 2,000 students. The committee wondered whether consolidation of some of the smaller districts could decrease administrative costs.

The committee recommended two more changes in 2003 that the State LWV Board overturned. First, the committee recommended changing the language for special needs students to reflect a recent Supreme Court ruling, which adjusts funding for disabled students to include economically disadvantaged and students with limited
English language skills. The board felt, however, that the more specific definition could be clarified in the Leagues explanation column. Second, the committee felt that the last sentence of our position could be eliminated, now that public school choice has been achieved by state statute. However, the board pointed out that vouchers remain a concern. The committee felt that language in the last sentence of our position could be used to advocate against vouchers.

Finally, several educational issues were recommended for further study in 2003. For the first time in history, federal funding for public education will be tied to test scores. This new federal legislation, called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also called the “No Child Left Behind Act”), calls for closing schools that have not achieved certain levels on standardized tests, which takes control of public education away from the local school boards. The committee felt that the League might want to add language to our positions that outlines the need for accountability that is controlled locally. In addition, technology now allows for the creation of virtual schools, which can have an impact on funding, since students no longer have to live in a particular district to enroll in this type of alternative education.

The 2003-2005 education study resulted in two new positions that expanded and strengthened the already held positions of local control and opposition to tax dollars given to private or religious schools. One position opposes the creation of more charter schools outside of local school board jurisdiction where there is no system of local input or control. School districts are encouraged to cooperate with other organizations, institutions and agencies while maintaining chartering authority. The other position addresses the expansion of Choice schools in Milwaukee in which public funding goes to private and religious schools with no requirements for student performance or employee standards. There are some legislative requirements for financial accountability, but not comparable to requirements of public schools. The new position also seeks to ensure that any individual or private company contracting to provide public education, as is the case for some virtual charter schools, is also publicly accountable.

Although a large part of the 2003-2005 study dealt with the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on local public schools, no specific position was recommended regarding this federal legislation. A survey by local leagues on the impact of NCLB in their school districts showed that most districts felt that there were some positive qualities of the Federal legislation, but also felt that the legislation restricted local control, was not adequately funded, and needed more flexibility regarding student assessments. Since the NCLB is federal legislation, no state League position was proposed. LWVWI could act on most state legislative requirements because of the LWVWI’s position on local control by School Boards.

The 2003-05 Education Study also studied Home Schooling as an alternative to traditional public education. Although there were concerns about requirements regarding home schooling, there was no consensus about teacher qualifications, record keeping, or assessment of student learning.

**Children with Special Needs**
The League defines "special needs" to mean children who are in need of additional help either because they are physically or mentally handicapped, because they come from culturally or economically deprived backgrounds, or because they are gifted. Because these children require a greater expenditure per child than other children, the League believes the state should provide more funding for them. In 1973 League supported a law mandating education for all children ages 3 to 21 with Exceptional Educational Needs (EEN) due to a handicapping condition. For the first time, the compulsory school law applies to the mentally, physically and emotionally handicapped.

The League was actively involved in the early 1980's in a coalition to provide special/specific
programs and aids for gifted and talented students.

(For other action affecting K-12 education, see *Social Policy*.)

WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

PHILOSOPHY

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is an integral part of the educational system in Wisconsin. It should continue to provide education for both employment and life-long learning.

The State WTCS Board is the appropriate level for developing, maintaining and supervising WTCS programs that receive state aid.

Each technical college WTCS district board is the appropriate level for developing, maintaining and supervising programs that do not receive state aid.

FUNDING

The Wisconsin Technical College System should be financed through the present combination of sources (district property tax, state general revenue, federal aid, tuition fees, other sources). Leagues favor a shift to more reliance on tuition, private sector and state aids, and less reliance on the property tax if changes in funding are to occur.

There should be adequate financial support for vocational education in Wisconsin at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

GOVERNANCE

State Wisconsin Technical College System board members should be appointed under a distribution formula that will ensure broad representation. It should include representatives of the following: employers, employees, farmers, women, geographic area representatives, minorities, Department of Labor and Human Relations, University of Wisconsin Regents (ex officio), and the Department of Education (ex officio).

District WTCS boards should be appointed by a committee made up of either county board chairs or school board presidents, depending on the boundaries of the WTCS district. A distributional formula should be used that includes representatives of the following: employers, employees, farmers, women, geographic area representatives, minorities and school administrators.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SECONDARY SYSTEM

There should be increased cooperation between the secondary schools and WTCS systems to provide improved vocational education opportunities for secondary students. Forms of cooperation could include: contracts with local school districts, shared facilities and instructors, flexible scheduling, credits toward high school graduation, and granting of advanced standing when a student later enters a regular WTCS program.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

The WTCS system should offer the college parallel program in districts that do not have a two-year UW center.

Associate degree credits should continue to be transferable at the discretion of the receiving institution. The two systems should continue to coordinate efforts to serve the needs of a varied student clientele without unnecessary duplication.

League's Vocational, Technical and Adult Education System position was the result of a study done in 1981-83. In 1984 League was able to use the newly adopted position to support a proposal that the responsibility for the initiation of programs should be shared.
between the local and state board since education and program needs vary throughout the state. We also criticized the lack of an affirmative action statement in the mission statement for the VTAE system.

In 1985 The League successfully opposed proposals in the state budget that would allow local boards to be elected by election districts and that would restructure the state board.

In 1989-90, the League led a coalition of groups in getting a law enacted which prohibited discrimination against a number of protected groups, including women, in both the University of Wisconsin and the VTAE system and requiring them to set up procedures for resolving complaints. Also in 1990 The League supported an administrative rule which would create a greater opportunity for women and minorities to serve on VTAE boards.

In 2010 delegates to the state Annual Meeting updated the position, including changing the VTAE designation to WTCS, for Wisconsin Technical College System.

(For other action affecting WTCS, see Social Policy.)

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FINANCING

Admission policies of the University of Wisconsin (UW) system should reflect the belief that every Wisconsin citizen should have access to a university education based on demonstrated academic ability, preferred student categories, and fiscal management goals.

Funding goals should include:

- tuition levels based on instructional costs, with consideration given to keeping education affordable and making financial aid available;
- increased funding for instruction following stated guidelines and providing sufficient instruction to enable graduation within four years;
- county funding of UW center facilities.

Highest priority should be placed on instruction by tenure-track faculty, although other types of instruction should be included.

UW System faculty and academic staff salaries should be maintained at a level which attracts/retains superior teachers and assures gender equity.

The positions on the financing of the UW system came as a result of the education financing study conducted in the 1987-89 biennium. League members gave the highest priority to providing UW education access to Wisconsin high school students in the upper 50% of their graduating class. Priority was also given to transfer students within the UW system, nontraditional students and minority students in general. Members also felt that it was somewhat important to provide access to out-of-state and out-of-country students. Enrollment limits should be part of the UW system fiscal management program.

League members agreed that funding goals should also be consistent keeping education affordable to all Wisconsin citizens and to making financial aid available. Funding increases should cover the cost of a full-time equivalency student at the rate equivalent to the cost of living increases based on the mid-range established by peer institutions.

In addition to increased reliance on General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funds, members felt long-term operation funding goals should rely on private sector donations/foundations, tuition, research grants, and fees/surcharges.

Funding policies should reflect a strong desire for students to graduate within four years of attendance. This would not preclude students from taking longer to graduate if desired, but indicates a preference for adequate funding to provide timely access to needed courses. Moderate importance should be attached to state funding for the purpose of advancing state policy goals, advancing private sector development, and funding programs which support minority, disadvantaged, and special-needs students.
League members also agreed that the state should use GPR funding to fund instruction by placing the highest priority on instruction by tenure-track faculty, less priority on instruction by academic staff and least priority on instruction by graduate students, although all three should exist.

UW faculty and academic staff salaries should be maintained at a level which attracts/retains superior teachers and should not be sexually discriminatory. Other factors to be considered should be cost-of-living increases and peer institution median salaries.

No action has been taken directly using this position. (For other action affecting the University system, see Social Policy.)

**GOVERNMENT FINANCING**

Promote financing essential state government services by a well-administered tax system, shared revenues and improved assessment practices.

The general aim of League positions in the area of government financing through the years has been toward support of tax revenues based on need and the total tax burden. Action efforts have been directed toward strengthening the income tax, reducing the property tax, minimizing the regressive features of the sales tax and promoting an educational aids formula that eliminates the ability to pay as an influence on education.

As long ago as 1949, the League recognized the inequities in the shared tax system. During this period, the League supported income tax increases by means of surtax, and opposed use of a sales tax. League recognized that increasing population and a complex economy would lead to demands for increased state services.

As a result of a 1965-67 study of state responsibility to local government, League members agreed that three criteria should be used to help evaluate any legislative proposals for local government: 1) Will inequality of local services and inequity in tax burden among the various communities be reduced? 2) Will governmental units of sufficient size for an adequate local tax base be promoted? 3) Will citizens be given a reasonable opportunity for effectiveness in influencing policies appropriate to the governmental unit?

As a result of the 1979 study, members reaffirmed the existing position on the general philosophy of taxation: tax sources based on the ability to pay and distribution based on need and the total tax burden. Members analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of various taxes and considered the role of user fees. They examined measures intended to enhance the tax base of local governments, particularly borrowing, tax incremental financing and industrial revenue bonds. The new positions were adopted in 1981.

Specific positions are as follows:

Support of financing of essential state government services by a well-administered tax system through: 1) strengthening the income tax based on ability to pay; and 2) use of a general sales tax with exemptions to make it less regressive.

Support of the state's role in financing and organizing effective local government through equitable distribution of state monies including:

1) Equitable sharing of tax proceeds by state and local units through improvements in distribution of taxes raised by the state;
2) A property tax relief formula that would tend to reduce local property taxes where they are above the state average;
3) Use of the property tax as part of the revenue mix, but decrease the percentage of reliance as part of that mix;
4) A highway aids formula that reflects cost, such as vehicle mileage or use; and
5) Use of increased users' fees at both state and local levels.

Support for local government's use of:
1) Borrowing cautiously and within limits;
2) Tax incremental financing but with tightened rules; and
3) Industrial revenue bonds when limited to original intent.

Support for periodic legislative review of tax exemptions and credits.

Support on the state's role in financing and organizing effective local government through improved assessment policies including equity in local property taxation through improvement in standards and procedures of the assessment process.

Support of an education formula that takes into account a local community's total tax burden and total available financial resources.

Support of a system of financing that ensures that a child's opportunity for a good education is not limited by the fiscal ability of the local school district; an education aids formula that provides that the state will assume a significant amount of educational financing, include the costs of building and debt service in the formula and provide increased state payments for children with special needs.

(See Education for an explanation of these last two positions).

The League favors the use of the income tax on the grounds that it is a fair and progressive tax based on ability to pay. Support for the sales tax to help generate needed revenue is coupled with emphasis on sales tax exemptions on necessary items, such as food and prescription drugs, to keep this tax from falling hardest on those least able to pay.

State Income and Sales Tax
The League's first position in 1947 opposed use of a general sales tax to finance a veteran's bonus; this was soon enlarged to oppose both the veteran's bonus and a general sales tax. When a general sales tax was proposed to meet booming state revenue needs in 1957, the state League opposed the legislation. Member agreement emphatically supported the income tax and the "pay-as-you-go" (income tax withholding and one-half pre-payment, adopted in 1961) as a method of strengthening the income tax. Because of the pressing need for additional state revenue and the desirability of influencing the selective sales tax, already adopted by the legislature, the League restudied the issue in 1963 and reversed its long-standing opposition to a general sales tax.

One of Leagues long-term goals -- the financing of essential state services through a strengthened income tax based on ability to pay -- was achieved in part in 1971 when a tax bill raising the individual tax rate passed. In 1969 the League had supported proposals for a small income tax increase, along with expansion and/or increases in the sales tax, but the bill passed without the income tax increases. The increase was enacted in 1971 however, with the top rate raised to 11.4%.

Local Government Financing
Property tax relief is a sum local governments receive which must be applied directly against the local tax levy. Shared revenues are returned to each local government to spend as it chooses.

League opposition to the traditional formula for shared revenues resulted began as studies showed the inequities of the formula. Initially League supported a distribution formula that would take into account where the money was earned as well as the taxpayer's residence. The present position supports a distribution method for state-collected funds that not only takes these factors into consideration, but also considers tax effort and population, since it is people who require services.

Improved equity in the shared tax system came 22 years after League first began to call...
attention to its shortcomings. In 1971 the legislature enacted a significant change in the shared tax formula, replacing it with a plan that distributes them according to population and need for property tax relief.

**Tax Incremental Financing**
Legislation passed in 1975 authorized cities and villages to utilize Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), a funding mechanism to encourage development in urban areas. It was intended to be a sophisticated financing tool to be used by communities to stimulate industry, rehabilitate declining areas, and reverse blight.

Abuses and misuses of the TIF program were reported and in 1981 the legislature tightened the regulations. The League supported the tightened rules.

**Periodic Review of Tax Credits and Exemptions**
During the 1979-81 study of taxation, local Leagues agreed that the legislature should review tax credits and exemptions periodically, using the following criteria:
- Is the credit or exemption easy to administer?
- Is it equitable?
- Are the expected goals being met? Have conditions changed so that the exemptions or credit are no longer needed?
- What are the impacts on:
  a. State and local finances?
  b. Environment and energy conservation?
  c. Economic climate?
  d. Social climate (i.e., health, welfare, housing, and safety)?

**Highway Aids**
Leagues who participated in the 1984 Update generally felt that the current highway aids formula appeared to be equitable, except for its "hold harmless" provisions, but that it is so complicated that it is very difficult to analyze. Therefore it may not be as equitable as it appears.

**Assessment**
Strong League support for equity in local property taxation has been responsible for League action to seek improved standards and procedures for the assessment of taxable property to make the assessment process professional, equitable, and efficient. The Wisconsin Constitution (Art.VIII, Sect. 1) requires, with limited exceptions that all property be taxed uniformly. The local assessor has the responsibility for discovering assessable property and for fair and equal treatment by applying the same standards to each property. Full market value (equalized valuation) is set by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue. It also assesses all manufacturing property.

League recognition that equity in assessment is basic to fair taxation has been translated into support for state standards for assessor certification, continuing professional training and a recertification process. The League has opposed legislative efforts to weaken or delay the process.

The League believes that assessors should be professionally trained and appointed based on ability. Since 1977, assessors must pass an examination and be certified by the state. The League supported this as well as the 1983-85 state budget tightening of recertification requirements.

The League supported the standards adopted in 1986, requiring each taxation district to have an assessment ratio (the percentage that the assessed valuation is to full market value) of at least 90% and not more than 110%. In the 1987-88 legislative session, the League opposed a bill which would have changed the standard to 75%. The bill failed to pass.

League support for larger assessment districts together with its support for strengthening county government resulted in support for a 1971 law providing for a county assessor system. The bill included formula funding by the state and provided for a 60% vote by the county board to adopt the system. There is no "opt out" provision. The League supported legislation for a simple majority vote as an incentive. It has taken no position on bills to allow withdrawal from the system. Member agreement on this issue was not a part of the League's 1984 update on assessment but in
discussion some members suggested that the inclusion of an "opt out" provision might encourage more counties to experiment with the system.

To date only Kenosha County has adopted the county assessor system (1972). Experience there suggests that the system may produce better assessment practices.

The 1987-88 governor's budget recommended the phase out of the county assessment program by 1990 and included an "opt out" provision by a 60% vote of the county board. The League opposed the phase-out of funding, pointing out that at a time when so much attention and study are focused on the property tax, the state should be encouraging measures to ensure accuracy, equity and uniformity in assessment. The measure failed to be enacted.

A 1989 bill requiring tax assessors to prepare a map showing the tax-exempt real property in the taxation district received League support under our "citizen's right to know" position. The bill died in committee.

**User Fees**

Leagues participating in the 1984 Update expressed dissatisfaction with our users’ fee position for a wide variety of reasons. Generally, Leagues recommended that when a conflict arises between funding a vital public service with users’ fees and funding a service with tax dollars, the issue be resolved in favor of the service being offered at a reasonable cost to users. This could mean at no cost at all.

(For a discussion of school financing, see *Education.*)
GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive and capable of making decisions.

Since its beginning the League has looked at many aspects of state government and has adopted a variety of positions.

STATE AGENCIES

Support of organization of state agencies on the basis of integration of function and service to the people of the state without waste, with reduction in number where compatible with these primary aims; governor-initiated reorganization with legislative veto.

At the time League studied governmental agencies, there were 84 state administrative agencies. In 1967, the legislature passed a comprehensive reorganization plan for state agencies, reducing the number from 84 to 32. The League, the only statewide organization to look at the plan impartially, was able to give strong support to the reorganization. Services were continued at the 1967 levels and administration was simplified by creating clear lines of authority from the various units to the governor and legislature.

In the 1975 session, the League successfully supported the functional reorganization of the Department of Transportation, believing that the restructuring would allow more unified and coordinated transportation planning.

In the 1995 budget, the governor proposed several changes. The secretary of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would be made a cabinet appointment, and the Natural Resources Board would be made advisory. The League believed that such a move would weaken the citizen’s ability to have input into department decisions. The Public Intervener’s office was moved from the Department of Justice to the DNR. League also opposed this move because it would remove the citizen’s ability to force local agencies to obey state environmental laws.

League opposed the governor’s proposal making the secretary of the Department of Education a cabinet appointee, serving at the governor’s discretion. The secretary is a constitutional office and League objected to making the change without a constitutional amendment. The court supported the League’s position. However, by moving some major responsibilities to other departments and reducing funding for the department of Public Instruction, the governor has greatly weakened the constitutional office.

GOVERNOR

Support of no restriction on the number of terms in office a governor may seek.

Wisconsin has never had a constitutional or statutory limit on the number of terms a governor may serve. The League opposes any limitation, believing that the people are capable of assessing a governor's performance.

STATE CONSTITUTION

Support of responsible but more flexible procedures for amending the constitution; a constitutional revision commission established by statute; opposition to a state constitutional convention.

The Wisconsin Constitution can be amended only if identically worded amendments pass both houses by a majority vote in two successive legislatures and then are approved by a majority of the electors voting in a statewide referendum. In addition, the scope of each amendment is narrowly limited. The Constitution also provides for revision by convention; the convention must be called by a majority of both houses of the legislature with the approval of a majority of the electors. The second method of changing the Constitution has never been used.

In 1960, the League supported the governor’s appointed a non-partisan Commission on Constitutional Revision which was asked to make recommendations on the need for, and
desirability of revising the Constitution and the best method of doing so, if needed. League recommended a number of the changes: four year term for constitutional offices; removal of limitation on state debt; assessment of merchants and manufacturers' inventories and livestock at a different rate from other property; reduction of the number of executive agencies; and elimination of the county uniformity clause. The League also supported the recommendation that "broadening the permissible scope of a constitutional amendment" was a priority item to eliminate unnecessary obstacles and delay.

In the consensus reached in 1962, although not expressly stated in the position adopted in 1963 was opposition to the calling of a constitutional convention. Attention was called to the fact that the constitution was not in need of a complete overhaul; that such a process might result in the loss of some of the strengths of the document; and that no procedures have been specified for calling a constitutional convention. Members agreed to work for responsible but more flexible methods of the amending process while emphasizing that safeguards should be retained to prevent the constitution from being amended too easily. In 1964 League supported a ballot measure which would allow reasonably related amendments to be introduced as one. The position permits support of an amendment to send to the voters a proposal approved by a two-thirds majority of both houses without requiring the approval of the next succeeding legislature.

In acting on these positions the League has repeatedly opposed the calling of constitutional conventions. The 1979 convention voted to use this position to oppose any state effort to call for a convention to amend the United States Constitution. Because there are so many questions about the process and extent of the powers of such a convention and because the LWV-Wisconsin believes both federal and state Constitutions are basically sound documents with other adequate methods of amendment, the League opposes amendment by convention.

APPORPTIONMENT
Support of:
Regularly scheduled apportionment based primarily on population equality, but also with consideration of the compactness and contiguity of districts; representation of diverse populations; and, in so far as is possible, recognition of community of interest as defined by town, village, city, county or ward boundaries and major geographical characteristics.

A redistricting process characterized by objectivity, accountability, timely and efficient completion and a reasonable degree of flexibility.

Citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process.

Establishment of an independent commission or designation of an independent agency to be responsible for the development of a legislative and Congressional redistricting plan

Streamlined court review of any legal challenge

League support for prompt reapportionment on the basis of one person, one vote is a long-standing position adopted in the early 1930's. The 1952 convention voted by better than a two-thirds majority to support reapportionment on a census basis, reaffirming the League position that every person's vote should have the same weight. The League decided that equal representation better reflects the will of the people and results in a stronger state government. The League's strong position no doubt contributed to resistance to proposals made regularly by legislators during the 1960's to revive area representation.

U.S. Supreme Court rulings in 1962 and 1964 made it mandatory to make a major effort to reduce populations' differences as much as possible in all types of districts. A position supporting "enforcement provisions" and court review if the legislature fails to act was first reached in 1963 under the League study of
constitutional revision. However, legislation supporting a reapportionment commission has consistently been defeated.

A 1966 LWVUS member agreement made it possible for the Wisconsin League to join the fight against the so-called Dirksen amendment (to allow consideration of factors other than population in apportioning one house of a bicameral legislature) since League members nationwide agreed that both houses of state legislatures should be apportioned substantially on population. The decisive defeat of the resolution calling for a constitutional convention to allow introduction of this amendment was a high point of League action in the 1969 legislature.

Wisconsin Leagues have had some of their most difficult battles in supporting apportionment of county boards on the basis of population. In 1965 the state League joined in a case in which the state Supreme Court ruled the unit system of county board representation unconstitutional. History repeated itself in 1971 when many county boards reapportioned themselves with their primary consideration being factors other than population. This time many local Leagues went to court and in most cases were successful in forcing proper apportionment. In 1972 national convention delegates decided that apportionment on the basis of population was a basic principle and extended the position to apply to all state and local legislative bodies.

In 1981 an expanded position was adopted, listing standards for apportionment and characteristics of acceptable methods; the position also identified roles of an independent commission, the legislature, the courts and citizens in the process.

Unfortunately, in 1981 as in 1971, several Leagues had to go to court to force county boards to apportion properly. Legislative efforts to redistrict Wisconsin's Congressional and legislative districts in 1981-83 were marked by partisan bickering, delay and compromise as well as three gubernatorial vetoes and court intervention. Movement on congressional redistricting proceeded slowly and the League was dissatisfied with the plans that surfaced during this period. The League also protested the lack of timely notice of public hearings and committee meetings and the lack of widespread publicity about them. Additionally the League questioned why public hearings were not held in each congressional district and arranged telephone conference testimony at five locations to allow citizen input.

In 1982 several organizations went to court to force action and the League entered the case as an intervener. The court set a deadline for the legislature and the governor to implement an acceptable plan; otherwise the court would implement its own. Subsequently the legislature passed a modified Congressional redistricting plan which the governor signed.

Futile legislative attempts at redistricting for Assembly and Senate seats and a veto by the governor finally resulted in court action and a three-judge federal panel drawing a redistricting plan to govern the 1982 fall elections for the 99 members of the Assembly and 17 of the 33 Senators. The court plan had the lowest population deviation of any in the state's history and in addition to governing the fall elections, governed five special elections. The League was also an intervener in this case and submitted a plan to the court drawn by the League and Common Cause representatives.

In a surprise move during the 1983 legislative session, another redistricting plan was given legislative approval as part of the 1983-85 Biennial Budget bill. The League and many others voiced strong opposition to the backdoor tactic of dealing with redistricting in the budget as well as the plan itself, which was clearly drawn to protect incumbents. This action resulted in another gubernatorial veto, but in a special session in July of 1983, the bill was passed and signed into law by the governor (Act 29).

This plan was also challenged in federal court and again the League joined the litigation, arguing that the Wisconsin Constitution clearly mandates redistricting by the legislature in their first session after the decennial census.
Although the federal panel did not address this issue, it did declare the legislative districts established by Act 29 unconstitutional and enjoined their use. This decision was challenged and in June 1984, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a motion to stay the federal district court injunction. The Supreme Court did not examine the issue when it reconvened in October 1984. Act 29 has governed the elections throughout the decade. As a result the 1984 legislative elections were held under Act 29.

In 1986-87, the League supported a bill to establish a Legislative Council study that would analyze the present system for redistricting and alterative methods, such as a commission, that might be used.

In 1986, a special task force on redistricting recommended position modifications. The 1987 convention adopted modifications that clarified redistricting commission details. Overwhelmingly, members stipulated that the commission should have initial responsibility for developing redistricting plans requiring a change in the Wisconsin Constitution. Support for legislative involvement in the redistricting process was affirmed through legislative membership on the redistricting commission, as well as a joint role for legislative leaders and other state officials in the commission appointment process.

League actively pursued the passage of a Constitutional amendment to establish a redistricting commission to do redistricting. A successful petition drive was held and press support was successfully obtained from the major newspapers in the state. In spite of heavy lobbying, by the League and others, the legislature did not act on a bill in time to achieve the passage of an amendment before 1991. The effort then centered on a statutory commission. Although that effort also was unsuccessful, more progress was made in public awareness and legislative support than has been achieved before.

Following a rushed and secretive 2011 redistricting process, which led to almost two years of litigation, the League updated its position to be more flexible. The League also launched a statewide campaign for redistricting reform.

**LEGISLATURE**

Support of structures, procedures and practices of the Wisconsin legislature which are characterized by:

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

A legislature that is responsible to the citizens and is able to hold its own leaders, committees, and members responsible for their actions and decisions.

**REPRESENTATIVENESS**

A legislature whose leaders, committees, and members represent the state as a whole as well as their own districts.

**DECISION-MAKING CAPABILITY**

A legislature with the knowledge, resources, and power to make decisions that meet state needs and reconcile conflicting interests and priorities.

**EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE**

A legislature able to function in an efficient manner with a minimum of conflict, wasted time and duplication of effort.

In 1975 convention delegates created a task force to examine the workings of the legislature. A publication was issued in 1977 as a result of the work of the task force and in 1977 they sought concurrence with the LWVUS positions on Congress. Member agreement resulted in the general positions adopted in 1979 as well as the specifics that follow:

**Pay**

Legislators should be paid an annual amount commensurate with that received by persons holding middle-level managerial positions. Pay increases should be voted on by legislators.

**Type**

The Wisconsin legislature should remain a bicameral body.
Leadership and Committees
The Wisconsin legislature should: make committee assignments in such a way as to achieve representation of diverse interests; review and continually evaluate the committee system in light of efficiency and contemporary needs; establish uniform committee rules for each house (including rules for public hearings) and current joint committee rules.

Decision-making
The Wisconsin legislature should provide adequate personal staff for legislators and adequate professional, non-partisan staff for committees and agencies to secure and make effective use of information; schedule legislative activities to make effective and responsible use of legislators' time; develop mechanisms for determining state priorities, long-range goals, and long-range impact of legislation; use electronic voting and other time-saving devices; establish clear procedures for oversight and performance audit.

Right to Know
The Wisconsin legislature should require open meetings (including caucuses) to the fullest extent possible; provide verbatim record of floor debate and comprehensive minutes of committee meetings; make full information on legislative proceedings available to the public; and require regular reporting of all payments to, and expenditures by lobbyists (except groups which do not hire or pay their lobbyists) and make such information available to the public; such reporting should include the original source of funds paid to lobbyists; empower the state Ethics Board to disclose advice given to an individual if a portion of it has been disclosed by that individual or if the advice has general application. The verbatim record should be taped and transcribed only on request and at the requestor's expense. Care should be taken that the cost does not escalate and the record does not contain extraneous material, as in the Congressional Record. (Reporting should not be required of groups which do not hire or pay lobbyists.)

A stricter lobby regulation bill which passed in the 1989-90 session, contained provisions supported by the League, including much fuller reporting of the costs of lobbying activities, covering all contacts with legislators, research, preparation of material and related work. In 1997 the League supported the electronic filing of reports, making them more readily available to the public by eliminating the 6-month waiting period for reports.

Oversight
Early in 1976 the state League acted under LWVUS positions for the accountability of representative government. The League lobbied for a bill to create a permanent joint legislative audit committee with oversight responsibility for the Legislative Audit Bureau. A companion bill directed that Bureau to audit all state agencies, examining spending levels, productivity and programmatic strengths and weaknesses. Modified versions of these bills were passed as part of the budget bill.

Open Meetings
While the League's initial attempts to pass a strong open meetings bill failed, later efforts were successful. The League became involved in drafting and securing passage of a strong open meetings bill that passed in 1976. In 1978 an attempt was made to weaken this law with a bill which repealed the requirement of public notice for regularly scheduled meetings. League opposed this bill and it was not reported out of committee. League has continued to be vigilant in keeping the open meetings law strong.

Civil Service and the Appointment Powers of the Executive Branch

Career Public Service
Support of merit recruitment and merit selection to implement programs, investigate complaints, and/or manage units of employees.

Support of hiring steps which are well-established and publicized in order to enhance the reputation of public service.

Support of action which would make public service attractive, including the employee's
ability to function and grow as a professional in state service, to implement programs, to move into administrative positions and to receive adequate pay for responsibilities.

**APPOINTMENTS**

Support of the governor’s right to appoint cabinet level positions. Development of criteria for establishing whether positions below cabinet level should be appointed or hired through merit recruitment and selection.

Support of appointed positions to develop policy; provide public relations and/or serve legislative liaison needs. Appointed positions should meet the following qualifications: highest priority is given to honesty and ability; also essential are appropriate education, training and experience.

Since the League adopted these positions in 1993, there has been no opportunity to use them.
NATURAL RESOURCES

Support of a physical environment beneficial to life; action to promote wise use of ground and surface water resources and improvement of water, air and soil quality.

The League's position on natural resources reflects League members' concern for their environment. Major national and state studies have concentrated on water, air, energy and solid waste, and land use, recognizing their interrelationships and the need to consider all media together. The League believes in high standards for water and air quality and supports government regulations and enforcement of the standards. The League supports planning to provide for wise use of resources.

STANDARDS AND ENFORCEMENT

Support of:
- Federally determined effluent standards with lower levels of government and the public participating in the standard setting process.
- The right of lower levels of government to set and enforce stricter standards if they choose.
- An enforcement procedure which allows the federal level to step in if state or regional agencies fail to act.
- The right of the individual to bring legal action in the event of injury to self or environment without preemption by government enforcement procedures.

Wisconsin led the way in taking governmental action to restore and maintain the quality of the environment, lending strong support when related agencies were reorganized into the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to create a public intervener office in the Department of Justice to speak on behalf of the public's interest in natural resources, and to establish programs for air and water pollution control and solid waste management.

In 1971, the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) was passed, requiring consideration of environmental impacts in the development of state policies and the administration of state regulations and actions. League has monitored WEPA guidelines and implementation over the years. In 1978 state policy was adopted to consider the impacts of state actions on energy resources and prime agricultural lands.

League has supported a series of successful efforts to increase the dollar amount of all statutorily set civil and criminal penalties. We have supported unsuccessful legislative efforts to adopt a citation system as another enforcement tool. Citations are issued like parking tickets for violations that do not directly threaten public health or the environment. The citation puts a price on not complying with all the rules.

In 1995, League strongly but unsuccessfully opposed the moving of the public intervener’s office from the Department of Justice to the Department of Natural Resources, eliminating its independence and its right to sue polluters.

In 1997, League opposed giving manufacturers an environmental audit privilege under the guise if encouraging routine audits. The bill would allow them to conceal voluntary pollution reports and give them immunity from criminal penalties for exceeding pollution standards. The bill failed to pass.

League also opposed the establishment of an Environmental Council composed of scientists in the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The League argued that the Council was unnecessary, its authority was too broad and poorly defined and that it would weaken the input of the general public in environmental affairs. We believe that the departments dealing with the environment already have adequate authority and are required to hold public hearings on rules. In final action, a council on metallic mining was established in DNR for one year.

In other action in the 1997-8 session, the League lobbied the DNR successfully against the rule NR1.52, which would roll back
standards for pollution laws to no stricter than federal laws.

**ENERGY**

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change threatens the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems as well as the economic, social, public health, and even the survival of the populations of the Earth. To stop climate change requires stabilizing atmospheric CO2 before the end of the 21st century at less than double the pre-industrial concentration.

Support of:
Accepting our responsibilities as global citizens to stop climate change.

Urging use by the State of Wisconsin, municipalities, individuals and corporations/businesses to use existing technologies to:
1) Make power plants, buildings and factories more efficient;
2) Make motor vehicles go farther on each unit of fuel; and
3) Shift to cleaner technologies.

Urging Federal leadership to adopt nationwide climate change pollutant reductions of at least 20% by 2020 and 80% by 2050, the levels of reductions of CO2 from the 1990 level that United Nations scientists say are needed.

Providing assistance to those harshly affected by climate change, especially low-income individuals and families.

**ELECTRIC ENERGY**

The following electric energy positions reinforce and implement the position on climate change. They expand the previous energy positions and integrate them with new positions on siting of power plants and transmission lines, restrictions on fossil fuels and natural gas, and on electric energy planning and regulation.

Support of:
1) **Limiting the demand for electricity.** Success depends on all entities (governments, corporations and shareholders, individuals) taking responsibility for their consumption and contributing to energy self-reliance.
   a. Reduce the use of electricity through a wide range of programs that promote conservation (behavioral change), energy efficiencies (using energy with fewer overall resources), co-generation and distributed generation.
   b. Use voluntary and regulatory energy demand management strategies.
   c. Include rate structures and pricing strategies, such as peak demand, that incorporate the true cost of energy, which is not reflected in the current market system.

2) **Financial incentives to advance clean energy technologies.** Increase funding and grants for technology transfer, research and development of new fuel sources, and improved methods to reduce polluting effects of energy production. Government, industry and other private sources should invest in such efforts with safeguards against conflict of interest. We support making tax incentives available on a sustained basis until new technologies are established and competitive.

3) **Siting of power plants, transmission lines and natural gas pipelines.** The process for evaluating the suitability of new proposed power plants, electric transmission lines and natural gas pipelines should include:
   a. Ample and effective opportunities for informed participation by all affected governments and the public in the formulation and analysis of proposed projects;
   b. Procedures for resolution of intergovernmental conflicts, including between states and the Regional

* Co-generation: simultaneously generating electricity and usable waste heat
Transmission Operator as well as with Canada in accord with international treaties;
c. Examination of all short- and long-term economic costs including, but not limited to, construction, delivery, operation, maintenance and impacts on price, supply and demand;
d. Evaluation of economic, social, environmental and aesthetic impacts in electricity generation area, the receiving area and any area through which the transmission line or pipeline must pass;
e. Routing any new transmission lines or pipelines along existing transportation and utility corridors, to the greatest extent possible;
f. Ensuring all infrastructure is constructed and maintained in an environmentally sensitive and safe manner;
g. Protection of sensitive on-shore and off-shore public lands and prohibition of drilling in and around the Great Lakes;
h. Limited use of Wisconsin lake and river shoreline for power plant sites;
i. Standards for thermal effluent limitations that protect background water temperature and overall surface water quality; policies that prohibit once-through cooling systems.

Note: Further positions and guidelines affecting the siting process are under Land.

4) Restrictions on fossil fuels. Aggressively reducing CO2 emissions to stop climate change requires de-carbonizing energy sources and storing carbon biologically or geologically.

a. Coal. The LWVWI supports prohibition on any new coal-fired plant, or any existing plant being rebuilt, unless it is equipped to:
   i. Co-fire renewable fuels
   ii. Capture usable steam for co-generation
   iii. Integrate gasification and combined cycle technology

iv. Capture carbon using the best available control technology
v. Sequester carbon using the best available control technology

b. Natural Gas. The LWVWI supports:
   i. Promotion of maximum use of energy efficiencies and renewables to conserve use of natural gas
   ii. Capture of usable steam for co-generation
   iii. Advocating that imports of natural gas do not come from environmentally sensitive areas or from countries without adequate environmental safeguards

5) Restrictions on nuclear power. The LWVUS recognizes nuclear power as a part of the nation’s energy mix, but it opposes reliance on nuclear fission. More specifically, the LWVWI, within LWUS guidelines, supports:

a. Prohibition of further licensing and construction of nuclear fission reactors until scientific questions regarding their effects upon public health and safety can be resolved;

b. Stringent radioactive effluent release standards throughout the nuclear cycle (production, transport, use, on-site or interim storage, decommissioning, long-term storage and reprocessing) for maximum protection of both the environment and public health and safety.

6) Electric energy planning. The Public Service Commission (PSC), acting under the Legislature and the Governor, is the primary energy planner in the state. The LWVWI supports the following requirements for electric energy planning:

a. The LWVUS Natural Resources positions for resource management decisions and comprehensive long-range planning;

b. A planning timeframe of not less than 20 years, with review and update of strategy options and specific proposals on a regular basis.
c. Integration of PSC plans with those of Wisconsin utilities and reflection of these in the plans of the Regional Transmission Operator;
d. Policy makers taking into account the global impacts of their decisions;
e. Sustained and integrated involvement of the public and affected government involvement in all aspects of formulation and analysis of energy policy;
f. Requirement of the PSC and other statewide energy planners to continually provide the public with information about electric energy, the policies and priorities that govern the use of electricity, the energy industry and the significant energy issues currently under consideration.

7) Regulation of Public Utilities. The provision of electric power is an essential social and economic need. It is vital to the public interest and common good. As such it has historically been highly regulated by the government.

The LWVWI supports:
a. Continued regulation of public utilities;
b. Regulation of utilities that is fair, open, transparent and accessible to the public in all of its proceedings. Accurate comprehensive information must be available to consumers for educational and decision making purposes;
c. A strengthened PSC with adequate funding and staffing to assure good decision-making and the ability to fulfill statutory responsibilities;
d. An independent regulatory process free from undue political and utility influence;
e. A minimum of a two-year waiting period before a commissioner or high level staff of the PSC can be hired by a utility.

Note: Further positions and guidelines affecting Energy are under LWVUS Energy.

In 1969, the four member states of the Lake Michigan Inter-League Group representing more than 100 local leagues in the Lake Michigan Basin studied the effects of power plants on water quality of Lake Michigan, principally thermal and radioactive effects. The State Board approved the position in 1971.

During the 1970’s through the early 1980’s, the LWVUS conducted a comprehensive energy study. Most state Leagues, including Wisconsin, participated in that study and added their special interests. State energy positions were adopted during this period.

During 1975 the LWVWI successfully supported power plant siting legislation that would increase the ability of the Public Service Commission to regulate location of power plants and transmission lines through a ten-year advance planning timetable. Public participation as well as input from all levels of government was assured at each stage in the process. In the 1990s, the integrity of this process was challenged when utilities sought faster permitting for building eighteen (mostly natural gas) peaking plants than the plan allowed. With the national movement toward deregulation of utilities, the advance planning process was gradually phased out.

In 1977, the League supported legislation prohibiting construction of new nuclear power generating plants until means of disposal of radioactive waste could be improved, but legislation was not adopted until 1984.

The League also supported several energy conservation bills. In the 1980’s laws were passed that required electronic ignition devices on all gas appliances, the use of water conserving plumbing fixtures, and appliance energy efficiency standards.

The purpose of the 2005-2007 Electric Energy Policy Study was to rebuild the LWVWI energy information base, inform our members and through them our communities, to update and expand existing positions so they address current issues, and to develop an aggressive advocacy agenda based on the new positions
adopted by the 2007 Convention. The positions include those on climate change and their implication for energy policy, strategies for clean electricity, electric energy planning, and regulation of utilities.

During the study period, LWVWI used existing positions to support legislation based on the Governor’s Task Force on Energy Efficiencies and Renewables, twice opposed legislation to repeal the moratorium on construction of new nuclear power plants, opposed legislation that permitted seizure of public lands under the laws of eminent domain, and began support for the and Wisconsin Safe Climate Act of 2007.

AIR

Support of policies and programs which protect the health of the people and preserve the natural resources of the state, including:

- A survey of air pollution problems;
- Development and implementation of a state plan for air pollution control;
- Establishment of minimum standards for air quality.

Beginning in 1978, League worked for the establishment of a vehicle inspection and maintenance (I&M) program in counties with excessive automobile-caused air pollution. When it was established in southeastern Wisconsin, League helped in promoting citizen compliance.

In 1984, Leagues concurred that the Air position could be used to support regulation of smoking in public indoor areas. The Clean Indoor Air Act was passed that same year, although the governor vetoed the penalties and enforcement provisions. League worked for several sessions before successful passage in 1989 of provisions for enforcement, penalties and expansion to private sector offices.

League also supported DNR's adoption of sulfur dioxide standards for major air pollution sources, and in the absence of federal action, supported adoption of the 1983 and 1985 Wisconsin Acid Rain Acts to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions to 50% of the 1980 levels by 1993 and to study cost effective means of reducing nitrous oxide emissions.

Also due to federal inaction, the League supported DNR's adoption of air-born toxins regulations to protect public health and the environment. In 1988 League joined three environmental groups as intervener to support the rules when major industries, trade associations and the Wisconsin hospital Association challenged them in court. The rules were upheld by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, in 1990.

League supported the successful adoption of recycling of CFC's (chlorofluorocarbons) in refrigerators and gradual replacement with a gas that does not contribute to ozone depletion and climate change.

LAND

Support of policies and programs which encourage acquisition of the following for conservation and recreation:

- Undeveloped areas with the primary purpose of leaving them in their natural state;
- Selected new areas of development for intensive use as well as development of some of the presently owned natural areas, particularly near urban centers;
- Additional scenic highway easements and lake and stream shore accesses.

Support of a continued state program of research and action on soil and water pollution.

Support of:

- The exercise of planning and regulatory functions by the state for land areas and activities of statewide concern and for land areas and activities that cannot be planned for and regulated on a strictly local level. Planning and regulatory involvement by the state, either directly or indirectly, is needed in the following general areas and activities:
a. Fragile and historic lands subject to irreversible damage and of state or regional significance;
b. Renewable resources lands subject to productivity losses of statewide significance;
c. Natural hazard lands where dangers to public health and to life and property may result if planning and regulation are not exercised;
d. State and regional public facilities and institutions;
e. Private development that has regional or statewide physical, social or economic impact;
f. Activities for which there is a demonstrated state or regional need not met by the private sector;
g. Restoration of native plant and animal species in areas in which they formerly thrived;
h. Restoration and preservation of areas that were once wetlands.

- Indirect involvement by the state through development of state standards and use of state review combined with strengthened regulatory and enforcement authority at lower governmental levels, when this approach can be shown to protect sufficiently the interests of Wisconsin citizens.

- Direct planning and regulatory involvement by the state to protect fragile, historic, and natural hazard lands of state or regional significance.

Support of a state organizational framework for land protection that:
- Integrates land use planning into the state's comprehensive planning process and coordinates it with plans and policies of local and regional agencies;
- Requires impact statements for public and private development of regional and statewide significance;
- Provides for appeal boards at appropriate levels to arbitrate disputed land use decisions between governmental bodies and between citizens and government;
- Requires substate regional bodies with authority to plan, advise, review, and comment on land use matters of regional concern;
- Requires local government to exercise at least a minimum of land use planning and regulation, and encourages maximum local decision making;
- Requires the adoption by the legislature of a statement of goal and objectives for land use planning
- Provides for the coordination of state agencies whose decisions affect land use.
- Requires all local units of governments, including counties, municipalities and townships, to adopt a comprehensive land use plan, which incorporates elements of a comprehensive plan recommend by the state, and empowers counties to draw up land use plans for municipalities and townships that fail to do so. The planning process should also:
  a. Require local units of government to adopt zoning ordinances and other land use regulations in conformity with their land use plans;
  b. Require coordination among local and regional units of government and agencies in drawing up land use plans and land use ordinances and regulations;
  c. Require public participation in land use planning;
  d. Require public hearings before adoption of zoning ordinances and land use regulations.
- Provides state assistance to local governments to carry out local land use management function, including a) state financial aid for research and planning, b) increased state technical and data-gathering assistance to include a comprehensive statewide Land Information System that is easily accessible to all citizens and, c) statutory authorization for local governments to exercise innovative land use and regulatory techniques.
Support efforts to preserve agricultural and conservancy lands of regional and statewide significance by means of land use plans developed at the county level or higher and implemented through regulatory methods — such as zoning, urban service districts, development timing and subdivision regulations — and through financial incentives such as use value taxation. When agricultural and conservancy zoning or districting is coupled with financial incentives to help carry out preservation goals, entry of lands should be mandatory with penalties for premature withdrawal.

Support preservation and redevelopment of existing urban lands through zoning and other regulatory incentives and tax breaks. Encourage brownfield restoration as a priority in urban areas. Encourage neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation and lifestyle choices including affordable housing and a range of densities.

(Further positions affecting land are under Pesticide.)

Planning
In 1965 the LWVWI study of agencies, policies and programs of Wisconsin's natural resources with particular emphasis on pollution control and recreation considered also problems of water quality, air pollution, agriculture, wildlife and recreation as they relate to conservation of our natural resources.

The League has consistently supported major state funding, usually bonding, for land acquisition and development for parks, wildlife habitat and natural areas preservation as well as construction of municipal sewage treatment facilities. League actively supported the 1967 Outdoor Recreation Program (ORAP), renewal of ORAP 2000 goals and funding through the year 2000. League supported bonding parks rehabilitation which was enacted into law in 1988. League supported the successful passage of the Stewardship Program which reestablished a long term bonding effort ($25 million for each of 10 years) for parks, wildlife habitat, stream bank and urban green space acquisition. In addition, the League supported efforts that eventually created in 1989 the Lower Wisconsin State Riverway to protect the free-flowing recreational river from Prairie du Sac to the Mississippi River.

In 1975 LWVWI examined land use planning and controls, and their effect on housing and the economy, considering taxation policy as it relates to land use; and investigating the role and functions of state, local and regional government in land use planning. Particular concerns were the preservation of agricultural land, the uses of land in urban areas, problems caused by transportation policies and the place of regional planning commissions in decision-making.

A farmland preservation bill was signed into law as part of the 1977 budget bill. The purpose is to keep agricultural land as farmland by giving farmers tax benefits rather than requiring them to pay property tax on the speculative value of their land.

League supported additional demonstration funds for the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Sustainable Agriculture Program in 1988 and in 1990 joined a very broad coalition of farmer, rural development and environmental groups in successfully providing new funding for sustainable agriculture research. The League participated in the DATCP review of food safety programs which recommended a 1991-93 budget initiative.

In 1987 a state budget initiative to consolidate the DNR and DATCP non-point source pollution programs was successfully resisted by the League and others. The League argued for improved agency coordination but maintaining DNR as the lead water quality agency in the state.

In the 1997-8 session, the League lobbied for a Legislative Council proposal for a state agency to develop an inventory of land resources, designating those to be protected from development, and to create standards for the development, implementation, enforcement and oversight of county and regional land use.
plans and ensuring coordination and cooperation. The plan was adopted.

A plan for the development of “brownfields,” urban land that has been polluted, was supported by the League, with caveats for more public involvement and protection of public health and safety. The plan is being implemented, but is in the process of being modified to provide more assistance to municipalities and to deal with issues of liability.

Mining
After the discovery of large copper and zinc lodes in northern Wisconsin, the League became concerned that the mining laws needed updating to protect the environment against damages from mining operations. Bills were passed in 1978 requiring companies to be bonded to insure compliance with DNR reclamation requirements. They also provided for protection of the environment in mineral exploration along with setting standards for reclamation of the land and protection for the public interest and communities affected by mining. Other provisions established rules for the use of water in mining operations.

As early as 1983, Exxon began to seek a permit to operate a mine at Crandon. Although it was dropped temporarily, the permitting process was renewed in the middle of the ‘90s by what has become the Nicolet Mining Co. Because of the severe threats to the environment, League joined with other environmental groups in 1997 to obtain passage of a mining moratorium, which would prohibit any new mines in the state until the mining company could show a history, of a similar type mine in another place, of successful pollution free mining operations and mine closing for at least ten years. The bill was passed and signed by the governor.

Also, in the 1997-8 session, League supported a bill which did not pass, which required mining companies seeking a permit to develop a mine to submit full records of their operations.

Wetlands
In 1978 the League was active in gaining the authorization for DNR to map all state wetlands over 5 acres and, in 1982, shoreline zoning regulation was extended to protect wetlands within incorporated areas. The League continued to work with other groups and Public Intervener to petition DNR to aggressively use its existing state powers and to make greater use of its state water quality review under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act to protect wetlands. Local Leagues have worked for the adoption of strong county and municipal ordinances to protect wetlands and other locally important environmental corridors and natural areas.

In 1986 LWVWI and LWV-Door County filed an amicus curiae brief in circuit court in support of state authority to adopt wetlands zoning if a county refuses to meet state minimum standards. The court upheld the law. In 1987 a challenge to the precedent setting 1972 Department of Justice vs. Marinette County decision by the Supreme Court reaffirmed that wetlands zoning was not a taking (if government regulation goes too far, the government must fairly compensate the property owner) and that future challenges should be addressed to counties, not towns.

In the fall of 1990, DNR held public hearings on water quality standards for wetlands. Rules and legislation protecting wetlands were adopted and implemented. League helped successfully to defend the rules against an attack during a 5 year review.

In 1990 League supported unsuccessful legislation to repeal the 1840's law which exempts cranberry bogs from environmental regulation relating to dams, drains and ditches.

The 1990's have been dominated by an attempt to pass a “takings” bill, which would require that property owners be compensated for the effect of state environmental regulations of their property or profit. The result would be the state paying the polluter not to pollute. The League has lobbied hard against these bills, at both the federal and state levels, because regulation is necessary to protect water, air,
zoning restrictions, etc., because the cost would be prohibitive and because the courts would be overloaded.

A bill allowing development of wetlands if there were compensatory mitigation was successfully opposed because it weakens the DNR’s authority to protect wetlands.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Support of the following positions:

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING:
- Wisconsin should prepare to deal promptly with low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) generated within the state;
- Wisconsin should develop a comprehensive plan for the long-term management of LLRW;
- A comprehensive plan should take into account both public health and the environment;
- The preferred option is to join the Midwest Interstate Compact to maximize future options while continuing to explore other options;
- The most important criterion for decision making is to assure that safeguards are provided for people and the environment. Next in importance is total hazard of the LLRW generated. Other important criteria are: costs to the taxpayer, the volume of LLRW generated, the best interest of the multi-state region, and the nation. Least, but not unimportant are costs to the consumer (of electricity or medical/research services) and the costs to the generator of LLRW; Agreement state status in some form is desirable, should Wisconsin have a low-level radioactive waste facility.

HANDLING AND TRANSFER:
- LLRW should be categorized by total hazard;
- Regulations for handling, transporting, treatment, and disposal should match the hazard of the wastes;
- To further the reduction of waste, Wisconsin should:
  a. Provide incentives to generators to minimize waste generation through improved management practices (incentives include both positive and negative measures);
  b. Encourage research to improve reduction techniques and investigate new approaches;
  c. Provide incentives to generators to use the best and safest techniques to reduce the volume of LLRW that requires burial. (Incentives are not only monetary but include technical assistance and expertise.)
- Decisions to concentrate waste must consider safety of radiation workers, the environment and public safety.

TRANSPORTATION & EMERGENCY PLANNING:
- Wisconsin should seek the authority to enforce standards and to correct violations in the packaging, handling, routing, and transportation of both radioactive materials and LLRW.
- Wisconsin should ensure that emergency response teams in each county receive training to deal with radioactive materials and LLRW.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL INPUT:
- Procedures for making decisions about facilities should take into account the concerns of nearby residents and affected local governments and provide for a resolution of differences;
- Wisconsin should develop a program to educate the public about LLRW issues;
- Wisconsin should ensure that open meetings with public notice, open records, hearings and appeal procedures be provided for local governments and nearby residents when proposals are made concerning LLRW management in their area;
- Regulations should be uniformly and consistently enforced. Citizens should
have standing to sue for enforcement of LLRW regulations.

Action on solid and hazardous waste has been taken under both national and state positions.

**Solid and Hazardous Waste**

In 1973 the League supported measures that established a state solid waste reclamation authority empowered to take all wastes collected locally, separate and process them, sell the valuable materials and dispose of the rest. The Wisconsin Solid Waste Recycling Authority became a reality in 1974, but was repealed in 1983 due to a lack of progress.

For many unsuccessful years the League supported a mandatory deposit on all beer and soft drink containers in order to reduce solid waste disposal costs as well as resource and energy use. However, recycling bills were enacted on a state solid waste hierarchy paralleling League positions. In 1990 a comprehensive recycling bill was passed. Leagues throughout the state lobbied for bill passage and were involved in implementation of the municipal recycling grants in order to achieve the 1995 landfill bans on 14 items. In 1998, League urged the legislature to continue to keep the tax on business that provides the recycling grants. The tax was extended until 2000, leaving the issue to the 1999-2000 legislature.

One of the most significant bills supported by the League in coalition with other groups in 1977 was a measure to establish a comprehensive solid and hazardous waste management program under the direction of the DNR. The measure included a "cradle to grave" approach to sites as well as long-term care requirements and spill management. The law was not implemented until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized federal regulations in 1981. Leagues were able to provide public education when national hazardous waste tragedies raised public awareness on this issue.

League encouraged the Legislature to maintain state delegation of solid and hazardous waste permitting programs by promptly adopting the new standards and regulations in the federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Act of 1984 related to leaking above and underground storage tanks. League has supported increased tipping fees to pay for program administration and cleanup contingency funds in the Environmental Repair Fund. The 1987-88 and 1989-90 state budgets included authority and funding for Safe Drinking Water 2000, and clean up of the 40 worst abandoned waste sites in the state. League supported funding in subsequent budgets, but the clean up has never been fully implemented.

League supported state adoption of a program, parallel to the federal Title III Emergency Planning and Community Right To Know Program, which authorized fees to fund state and county staff and necessary response equipment and extending reporting requirements to public facilities and private laboratories storing extremely hazardous chemicals. League supported a 1990 law which establishes a Toxic Waste Minimization Program of technical assistance and cost-shared process audits as a first step toward implementing a zero-discharge on toxic substances policy.

League was successful in winning restrictions to NR 718 in 1996, allowing the land spreading of organic chemicals (petroleum contaminated soils). The restrictions incorporate notice to neighbors and the community and establish set-back requirements to meet odor, public health and property value concerns.

Action in 1997-8 was support of the expansion of areas considered affected by hazardous waste disposal site to ½ mile, providing greater opportunity for citizen input.

**Low Level Radioactive Waste**

The Low Level Radioactive waste position was developed as events were unfolding in the compacting of Midwestern states. To accommodate different state perspectives, national League was asked by the Midwestern and Northeastern Leagues to develop additional procedural guidelines for taking
positions on LLRW (see Impact on Issues, LWVUS).

In reaching the state position on LLRW, members believed reduction in costs should not take priority over, or affect the safety of, the disposal procedures chosen. Members are more concerned by the cost to the taxpayer than to the generator or the consumer.

In 1983 the League testified in favor of Wisconsin adopting the Midwest Compact. In 1986 we testified in support of the LLRW Regional Management Plan and the method for selecting a host state. League continued to work with other Midwest state Leagues to monitor the Compact Commission meetings and the development of a LLRW facility in Michigan. The Compact dissolved in 1998. However, pollution protection and source reduction measures have reduced the need for treatment and isolation of low-level radioactive wastes.

WATER

We support:

Reaffirming the Great Lakes Compact (Wis Stat 281.344-346), which strictly limits unnatural diversions of water from within the Great Lakes Basin. The Great Lakes Compact provides guidelines for mandatory standards of water conservation and efficient water management within the Great Lakes Basin. We support extending these mandatory standards to all waters of the State to prevent ground and surface water depletion.

Water conservation programs that:
1. Are based on best practices and sound data
2. Prevent depletion of our water resources
3. Take into account cumulative impacts of local and regional water use.
4. Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Ongoing testing and monitoring for water quality and quantity on state and local levels.

State, local and citizen legal authority to set and enforce their water quality and water management standards.

Respect for Tribal sovereignty and treaty rights in regard to water resources.

Protecting water quality and quantity through wastewater and stormwater standards and management for both point and non-point sources.
1. Adjust cumulative discharge standards for waste and storm water discharges into surface or underground water where effluent levels have been proven toxic.
   a. Acknowledge that cumulative discharge may come from a combination of sources which include, but are not limited to agricultural, mining and forestry, industrial, commercial, municipal, residential and institutional. (“Agriculture” is understood to be broadly defined to include any agricultural practices including current or emerging technologies.)
   b. Utilize sustainable practices and green infrastructure that mimic natural hydrologic processes to augment natural processes to control runoff.
2. Work to eliminate all emergency discharges or spills of untreated sewage, or waste or polluting materials into the environment that threaten public health and the environment by potentially contaminating sources of clean water for humans, wildlife habitat and fisheries.
   a. Increase and enforce per incidence fines offending parties are assessed and create fines and funds to restore the negatively impacted environment.
   b. Decrease stormwater loadings that negatively impact the capacity of wastewater treatment facilities,
decreasing the potential for overflows.
c. Monitor the transport of polluting materials both overland, over waterways and in underground pipelines.

3. Provide natural areas where runoff from impermeable surfaces and extreme precipitation events can soak into the soil instead of being released directly into bodies of water or directly into wetlands:
   a. Promotes replenishment of the hydrologic cycle as well as harvesting of rainwater for immediate uses (such as drinking water, irrigation, and livestock).
   b. Prevents the loss of limited sources of drinking water by allowing fresh water to follow its natural course of eventually flowing to the ocean.
   c. Prevents trash, bacteria, phosphorus, heavy metals, pharmaceuticals and other pollutants from unrestricted entry into bodies of water.

4. Protect and enhance the biological integrity of wetlands and other naturally-occurring hydrologic resources that provide water quality, flood protection and habitat benefits.

Sufficient funding for state and federal agencies to monitor water quality and quantity through regular testing, and have a legally defined mandate to act in upholding water standards.

1. Establish dedicated revenue sources to provide a dependable source of funding for state water quality programs.

2. Revenue sources should have a clear and transparent connection to the use or potential abuse of water, generate sufficient funds to make an impact on water quality and quantity issues, and be easy to collect. Funding options should include:
   a. General revenue sources because all Wisconsin citizens benefit from adequate water quality and quantity.
   b. User fees and taxes assessed to activities that affect water quality and quantity.
   c. Other revenue sources not mentioned may be considered for support if they meet these criteria.

(Further positions affecting water are under Pesticides.)

In 1959, League adopted the first state positions following a study of water resources in Wisconsin, with emphasis centered on problems of water use, administration of water resources, and particularly the division of responsibility among state agencies in management of the resource.

Between 1959 and 1966, League supported a bill calling for a permit system for high-capacity wells and measures aimed at applying the same rules of justice to the administration of ground and surface water. These were strongly opposed by agricultural interests. In 1985 the legislature adopted the Water Resources Conservation Act, supported by League, as a part of the Great Lakes states strategy to conserve water and resist major water transfers out of the Great Lakes basin. League was involved in developing administrative rules and a state water quantity plan.

In 1982-83 League and other environmental groups greatly influenced a major bill protecting groundwater, getting many unacceptable provisions changed. It was passed in 1984 with an unacceptable transfer of authority for animal wastes from DNR to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. League worked to get the governor's veto of this provision and to sustain the veto in a special veto session. Local Leagues conducted updates on local
groundwater conditions during the legislative struggle. League continues to monitor the many state agencies with groundwater standard setting, rule making and research responsibilities in implementing the law.

A bill banning the use of phosphates in detergents was supported by the League and passed in 1977. The law was allowed to lapse in 1983. Despite heavy industry lobbying, League and other environmental groups convinced the legislature to adopt a permanent ban on high-phosphate detergents effective in 1984.

Several bills regarding septic tanks were an issue in the 1977-78 session. One bill, requiring building permits for new septic systems, was supported by the League and passed. The League opposed another bill which would have greatly expanded the number of allowable experimental systems. A very modified version was included in the budget review bill. In 1976 the League again supported the transfer of septic system regulation from the Department of Health and Social Services to the DNR. This proposal failed. The program was subsequently moved to the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations. League participated in the environmental review of experimental septic systems, mounds, and has opposed their unrestricted use under land use positions. While holding tanks will continue to be regulated, mound system control lapsed to the counties in mid 1987.

League was active in state implementation of the federally mandated Safe Drinking water amendments of 1986 and 1996 to clean up Wisconsin's waters sufficiently to reach the federally mandated "swimmable, fishable waters" standard. A program of grants was established to provide money for clean up, but the grant program evolved into a revolving loan fund.

In 2003 a state League committee updated the position on water to address revenue sources. Although a few dedicated revenue sources for water quality programs existed in 2003, the committee deemed them insufficient. A dedicated source of funds, either new or reallocated, should be combined with General Purpose Revenues to meet Wisconsin's needs for the management of its water resources.

In 2013 the League updated the position again through the work of a statewide committee, resulting in adoption of the new position at the Annual Meeting in 2014.

PESTICIDES

Support of:
- Restricted use of pesticides until such time as the scientific question of their effects can be conclusively resolved:
- Classification of pesticides, complete and understandable labeling of pesticides, and state or federal certification of applicators using restricted pesticides.

PESTICIDE REDUCTION

Support for the reduction of exposure to all pesticides and the use of non-toxic alternatives. Governmental bodies should encourage a reduction in pesticide use through the promotion of management programs such as Integrated Pest Management, sustainable agriculture, and non-toxic control techniques.

State governments should provide economic incentives to farmers and growers to implement these alternative techniques. State governments should provide funding for training in these techniques to employees of public agencies and institutions, to commercial applicators, to farmers, and to private individuals. Anyone handling pesticides as part of a job should be required to demonstrate knowledge and competency and, before receiving a license or certification, be required to take a training course and pass a state regulated examination.

Pesticides should be used selectively, not routinely, in: hospitals, nursing homes, restaurants, schools, playgrounds, publicly owned buildings, golf courses, parks, roadsides, and swimming pools.
GOVERNMENTAL REGULATION OF PESTICIDE USE
Support for the regulation of the use of pesticides by all levels of government. Government standards should be set for all lawn care and mosquito abatement companies. Adequate funding for all appropriate levels of government should be established to finance testing for over-spray, drift, and water contaminations. Pesticide drift beyond the boundaries of the targeted area should be prohibited by law.

The use of pesticides should be totally prohibited in the following instances:
- Aerial spraying of residential neighborhoods' recharge zones for drinking water supplies;
- Vulnerable designated wetlands and other natural areas;
- Habitats for endangered species.

In the absence of federal regulations, state governments should enact organic labeling laws and organic farming certification laws. In addition, funding for increased testing by appropriate state agencies for pesticides in food is essential.

States should be able to set residue levels for food that are stricter than federal level.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF PESTICIDE USE
Belief that lawn care companies, structural pest control companies, and agricultural pesticide applicators should provide the public, including agricultural workers, with extensive information about pesticides and pesticide use, including:
- Purpose of application
- Brand name of pesticide(s) used
- Date and time of year when pesticides are to be applied
- Label precautions and disposal information
- Registration status
- Amount and names of all inert ingredients
- Name, address, and telephone number of applicator
- Evidence of applicant's license or certification
- Telephone number of state agency in charge of pesticide regulation
- Telephone number of nearest Poison Control Center
- Health symptoms and first aid.

Because of the potential for involuntary exposure to pesticides, individuals should be notified prior to application of pesticides. Re-entry times and exposure precautions should be conspicuously posted. Information should be posted for interior and exterior pesticide application. Posting should occur in advance of application of any pesticide.

In 1969, the Lake Michigan Inter-League Group (LMILG) decided to work under the national Water Resources position for agreement on the use of persistent pesticides. Again, local Leagues throughout Wisconsin participated so the agreement has statewide use. During the late 1970's, pesticide pollution of groundwater became evident in the Central Sands area and there were increasingly widespread instances of groundwater pollution from landfills and other land uses.

LMILG updated the position in 1990. This position and the new Agriculture position have increased League involvement in local and state debate on pesticide regulation and alternatives to chemicals in agriculture, urban and home use. Action has included education projects and efforts by local Leagues to get pesticide ordinances passed.

In 1992 League supported a bill passed, requiring disclosure of information on pesticide impacts and hazards to employees of landscape services, customers and the community. In 1997, we opposed weakening the rules governing use of pesticides near schools, day care centers and playgrounds. The change would eliminate posting warning signs on public roads, and change the date of pre-notification, limiting citizens’ right to know.
TRANSPORTATION

Action by the LWVWI in the area of transportation has been taken under the national League position as well as the state Land Use and other Natural Resource positions, and Social Policy positions under Meeting Basic Human Needs, Equal Rights and Community Policy positions. The League supported the repeal of the internal improvement clause of the Wisconsin Constitution as it applies to transportation facilities. Repeal would have allowed state expenditure for capital equipment which could aid in the rejuvenation of the state rail system and mass transit. The measure was defeated in two referenda.

A special session of the legislature in 1975 considered a wide-ranging transportation proposal, including a revised road aids formula, mass transit funds, money for state highways and bridges, plans for the reorganization of the Department of Transportation and the establishment of county transportation commissions. The League supported the proposal but the legislature did not!

In the 1977 budget, the League supported provisions which made allocations to mass transit and supported repair of highways. However, in the 1978 budget review bill, the League opposed an increase in allocations for highways with no increase in mass transit funds, in spite of a shortfall in urban transit systems in two years. The League did support an allocation to purchase railroad track.

Transportation was one of the most controversial items in the 1979 budget. Because of decreased revenue from the gasoline tax, the governor requested general purpose funds for new highway construction. The League supported maintenance of existing highways and increased funding for mass transit. In a compromise bill the need to increase revenues from the gasoline tax was not addressed. Through clever use of the line item veto power, the governor in 1987 authorized two separate increases in the gasoline tax. It was also indexed to provide more stable revenue by tying increases in the tax to decreases in gasoline sales.

In 1994, League protested the canceling of Amtrak services from Milwaukee to Chicago and urged increased funding from national and state governments. This action was based on Social Policy, Natural Resources and Community Policy positions. We also supported the establishment of the bicycle as a vehicle that year.

The transportation budget of 1995 was separated from the whole budget. League worked for equal access to and adequate funding for mass transit, maintenance of present roads and highways, but no new or expanded ones. The budget process of 1995 was condemned by League for the proposal of a “Super Amendment” which was the result of secret negotiations by the Joint Committee on Finance and the Assembly caucus. Included in the amendment during closed sessions were funding for mass transit, aids to counties and municipalities, aids for local road improvement and bridge and freight rail programs.
SOCIAL POLICY

EQUAL RIGHTS

Support for equal rights for all regardless of race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, religion, disability, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, or any other class protected by applicable state or federal laws, with recognition of the special needs of Native Americans; action to combat poverty and discrimination and to provide equal opportunity for employment, housing, quality education, and access to public accommodations.

The broad thrust of the Social Policy positions is aimed toward alleviating discrimination and poverty. Action efforts have been directed toward equal access to education, jobs, and housing as well as equal rights for all.

Beginning in 1928, positions have been adopted covering support for services and opportunities for Native Americans, opposition to discrimination in public employment based on sex and marital status, support of the merit system, opposition to discrimination against minorities, and recognition of the responsibility of government to share in the social and economic problems which affect the social welfare.

Using its positions, the League has consistently supported legislation to prohibit discrimination in public and private employment, public accommodations, including transportation, and housing. It has supported legislation to strengthen, through increased appropriation and stronger enforcement powers, the agencies which deal with discrimination.

Women

As early as 1927, the League opposed any legislation which threatened to weaken the laws which had been passed for the protection of women in industry. In the early years the League opposed the ERA because it would have meant overturning such laws or applying them to both sexes.

Nevertheless many of the “women’s” issues in the ‘60’s were supported by the League based on positions on preventing poverty and racial discrimination. The League supported publicly funded child day care based on children's needs rather than the mother's. Opposition to discrimination centered on race rather than sex, and support for family planning was based on the concern for poverty.

In 1972 action on the state and national level expanded the equal rights position to include opposition to sex discrimination and support for the ERA. The ERA was quickly and easily ratified by the Wisconsin legislature in 1972, although it failed to receive ratification by the necessary 2/3 of the states. A similar amendment to the Wisconsin Constitution was approved by the legislature in two successive sessions, but failed to win approval in the subsequent referendum. The League, in conjunction with other members of an equal rights coalition, continued to work for equal rights. In 1975, a concerted and successful effort was directed toward the passing of a bill that implemented the intent of the ERA by removing sex distinctions from all statutes except those dealing with family law. Family law statutes were revised later under divorce reform and marital property law.

The League, along with other groups, was successful in preventing the rescission of Wisconsin's ratification of the federal ERA in the late 1970's. In 1983, it also found itself in the unusual position of opposing a state ERA because of the potential negative impact on the passage of a federal ERA. Failure was a real possibility and would have had a devastating effect on the momentum of the national amendment at that time. Success, paradoxically, would only have strengthened opponents who held that rights can be guaranteed state by state. Also, the restrictive clauses added to the amendment which dealt with the military draft, shared toilets, abortion and sexual orientation would have set a dangerous precedent.
In 1979 with the demise of the Governor's Task force on the Status of Women, the League with five other statewide organizations established the Wisconsin Women's Network (WWN) as an on-going coalition working on issues affecting women. Since that time, the WWN has coordinated efforts on many issues and the League has remained a staunch supporter of it.

League members were also instrumental in the creation in 1982 of the Wisconsin Women’s Council, a statutory state agency to replace the Governor’s Commission on the Status of Women. The Council’s purpose is to ensure that state policies and practices take into account the well-being of women. The 1995 budget greatly reduced the Council’s funding, consequently reducing its effectiveness. In addition, the state League has supported specific legislation intended to eliminate sex discrimination in housing, in access to credit, selling or leasing automobiles, in the language of public documents, employment, education, and such.

The Wisconsin League opposed the Wisconsin Marriage Amendment, adopted by statewide referendum in 2006. The amendment stated that only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. In 2014 the fate of the amendment is on its way to the Supreme Court of the United States. ACLU-Wisconsin challenged it on behalf of a number of citizens. The amendment was struck down as unconstitutional by Federal Judge Barbara Crabb in July 2014. The state appealed to the 7th Circuit, which in September 2014 affirmed the ruling of the lower court. It is expected that the Supreme Court will take up same-sex marriage cases from a number of states, including possibly Wisconsin, in its next session.

The League updated its Equal Rights position to address gender, gender identity and expression, and sexual orientation at its 2015 Annual Meeting.

Native Americans

The League recognizes the special status of Native Americans and their unique relationship to the federal government. On the state level, the Wisconsin League has supported legislation extending health, welfare, educational and housing assistance to Native Americans. On the national and state level the League supported the return of the Menominee to reservation status in 1975. Support for services has continued through the monitoring of state budget appropriations.

Employment

Over the years, the League has taken action on many issues affecting equality of opportunity for employment. Since 1946, League has opposed discrimination based on race, sex and marital status. It supported the strengthening of the Fair Employment Practices Committee in 1951 and has consistently supported affirmative action. The League also supported a civil service reform limiting the use of veteran's preference points to a one time entry.

In 1983-85, the Wisconsin League updated its position on efforts to obtain equal opportunity for employment, centered around monitoring the application of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to women. Local Leagues were given a monitoring guide and worked to insure that women and advocates were appointed to the Private Industry Councils statewide. The League supported the expansion of the jobs program in 1986, but opposed the mandatory "workfare" proposals which required welfare recipients to do community work where job training and other employment services are not available.

The League strongly supported the 1984 establishment of the Governor's Task Force on Comparable Worth to develop a job evaluation system for state classified employees and University of Wisconsin system academic staff. Implementation of the Task Force recommendations was vigorously supported in the 1985-87 state budget.

Awareness of the problems of displaced homemakers in the early 1980's led to League support for state funding and establishment of displaced homemaker centers attached to the vocational education system. The centers
assist displaced homemakers to get necessary counseling and job training to assist them in entering the workforce.

In 1992 the League supported the Wisconsin Women’s Network in its work with veteran’s groups and legislators to satisfy a veterans’ proposal to eliminate their “preference” system and to make them a “protected class” in the affirmative action system. A compromise passed, enhancing the veterans’ preference system without sacrificing the affirmative actions standards intended to make up for past employment discrimination.

The League has supported all legislation to end sexual harassment. Under previous law, complaints of sexual harassment could only be taken to the Equal Rights divisions and awarded only restoration of job and back pay. In 1992, a Wisconsin Civil Rights law was passed, permitting the aggrieved party to sue in court for punitive damages.

In 1987 the League supported successfully the Family Medical Leave Act which would allow parents to take time off without pay for six weeks at the birth or adoption of a child. The act was extended to include more employers in 1991. Since then there have been repeated attempts to make the act consist with the federal act. League has opposed these attempts because we believe the Wisconsin version is better.

**Housing**

The League not only supports fair housing legislation based on state and national positions, but also equal access to housing, which means measures to increase the supply of low and moderate cost housing.

In 1965 the League was instrumental not only in the passage of the state fair housing law but in gaining open housing ordinances in local communities as well. Continuing efforts included support for measures to promote low cost housing in all communities, removal of exemptions to fair housing and improvement of migrant worker housing. The League also supported increased enforcement power and responsibility regarding migrant housing conditions.

For a number of years, the League supported the establishment of a uniform building code for one and two family dwellings and statewide standards and inspections of manufactured housing. The uniform code was finally established in 1979.

Other initiatives supported by the League are the Housing and Rehabilitation and Conservation program, which made deferred payment and low cost loans available for rehabilitation of deteriorating housing; creation of a Migrant Labor Council to regulate employment and housing; group homes, supported under Administration of Justice and Social Policy positions.

The League supported the 1982 omnibus housing bill which created the state Council on Housing charged with developing a state housing plan and requiring the Wisconsin Housing Finance Authority (WHFA) activities be consistent with the plan. In 1984, WHFA became the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). League expressed concern that the emphasis would be switched to economic development rather than housing.

**Education**

The League believes that every child should have an equal opportunity for a quality education. The League supports Head Start programs and school district integration and believes that busing can be a necessary tool to achieve equal opportunity in education. On the state level, the League has supported compensatory programs for the disadvantaged, equalized educational financing, and assurance that no segments of the student population are excluded from public school systems.

**SEX EQUITY**

Adequate state funds should be provided to eliminate sex bias and stereotyping, with recognition of bias against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, and to provide sufficient nontraditional educational, career and other options for women and men.
Measures to prohibit discriminatory practices and provide redress at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels were first supported in 1976 when League supported a state statute prohibiting sex discrimination in school sports. In 1983 the law was strengthened by the passage of Sec. 118.13 mandating sex equity in elementary and secondary schools. The same protections in state law were extended to the post-secondary systems in 1990 when the League took the lead in a coalition promoting the bill. The League has continued to work in coalition with other organizations to monitor the enforcement of Sec. 118.13 through the Department of Public Instruction.

In 1976, legislation was introduced to provide an alternative to court-ordered busing for racial integration in the Milwaukee metropolitan area schools and any school attendance area with more than a 30% minority population. The state League, in consultation with the Milwaukee area Leagues, supported the compromise measure (Chapter 220) finally adopted.

In 1984, the Milwaukee School District filed suit against suburban school districts to force a restructuring that would provide greater opportunities for area-wide integration. Local Leagues in the area provided a valuable forum for information.

The League updated its Sex Equity position to address lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, at its 2015 Annual Meeting.

(See Government Financing for positions and action on school financing, and Health Care for related education issues.)

Public Accommodations
Public accommodations are such things as public transportation, restaurants, swimming pools, etc. League action has been primarily to oppose discrimination in public accommodations on the basis of race.

League supported a new law enacted in 1990 that extends to private non-profit organizations prohibitions against discrimination in providing accommodations or amusements unless the event or service is restricted to members only. Previously such restrictions applied only to commercial enterprises.

DIVORCE REFORM

Support of divorce laws which:

1) Prohibit discrimination based on sex in any consideration or decision related to divorce.

2) Provide financial settlement (maintenance payments and/or property division) with just consideration given to:
   a. Length of marriage;
   b. Contribution of each party to the marriage, including appropriate economic value to each party’s contribution in homemaking and child care;
   c. The earning capacity of each party;
   d. The contribution of one party to the other’s increased earning power;
   e. The terms agreed to regarding child support.

3) Award child custody on the basis of the best welfare of the child(ren), without bias based on gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race or disability.

4) Determine child support on the basis of:
   a. The financial resources of the child;
   b. The financial resources and potential earning capacity of each parent;
   c. The physical, emotional and educational needs of the child;
   d. The value of custodial services;
   e. The preference of the custodial parent to remain in the home.

5) Remove the necessity of placing “fault” with one of the parties.

6) Recognized “irretrievable breakdown” as grounds for divorce.

Support for legal and economic protection for men and women in divorce cases is included in this position.

The 1976 state League Council voted to modify support for equal rights for women to include the area of divorce reform. In the 1977-79 legislative session one of the most
significant achievements was the passage of divorce reform legislation. The measure, sometimes referred to as a "no fault divorce bill," established irretrievable breakdown as the sole ground for divorce. The law also specified criteria that the court must take into account when making judgments regarding support, child custody, maintenance payments, and property division.

Major initiatives were pursued in 1983-85 in both child custody and child support. The League supported the concept of shared custody as an effective means of maintaining the parental bond after divorce, but questioned many provisions of the unsuccessful 1983 legislation. The Child Support Initiative would have provided for automatic wage withholding, a percentage standard of set support and a state supplement if parental resources are inadequate to meet a prescribed support level. The thrust of the pilot is to provide incentives for parents to work, which the income maintenance program does not do. The initiative was supported by the League. The standards of child support and the wage withholding provisions were adopted. The wage supplement provision was never adopted.

MARITAL PROPERTY REFORM

Support of legislation to insure that:

- Economic value is placed on the work of both spouses regardless of earned income;
- The tax structure is equitable to both spouses;
- Legally, marriage is considered an economic partnership that establishes rights and obligations;
- Marriage is an option for both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

Specifically:

All property and assets brought to the marriage and property or assets acquired through gift or inheritance during the marriage shall be shared property.

All earned income received by either spouse during the marriage shall be shared property. During the marriage all earned income of either spouse shall belong equally to both and both spouses shall have equal rights to manage and control earnings.

Spouses shall be entitled to one-half of all property acquired during the marriage other than gifts and inheritances. Written agreements entered into by both partners regarding property ownership shall be recognized by the state.

With the accomplishment of divorce reform, the League realized that marital property laws are often unfair in their assumptions, and following study, the resulting position was adopted in 1979. The LWVWI supported major reform legislation which was introduced that same year.

After an enormous education and lobbying effort orchestrated by the League and the newly formed Wisconsin Women's Network (WWN), the Marital Property Reform Act became effective on January 1, 1986. In each successive legislative session, League worked with Legislative Council Committees to deal with technical problems while maintaining the basic purpose of the law and supported several trailer bills solving those problems.

The League updated its Marital Property Reform position at its 2015 Annual Meeting.

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Income Assistance and Family Planning

League support for public assistance grants to low-income families arose primarily from the national Human Resources study. The national consensus following the Meeting Basic Human Needs study in 1986-88 reaffirmed League's commitment to adequate income assistance for low-income families.
In Wisconsin major activity focused on achieving adequate level of income support in welfare proposals. In the 1970's the League worked with the Public Assistance Coalition composed of representatives of labor, church, and welfare organizations. The coalition worked to translate concern for the poor into effective education and action. League lobbied for continued funding for Community Action programs, legal services for the poor, family planning and research programs, day care facilities and the Social Services Amendments Act of 1974.

Concern about financing of programs to meet human needs led the LWVUS to examine General Revenue Sharing (GRS) as a possible alternate source. Because the intent of GRS was to allow for comprehensive planning at the local level, it seemed reasonable to assume that some of the funds would be spent on human needs programs. As local Leagues familiarized themselves with the process, they realized that this would not occur without long-term, broad-based public demand. Many Leagues began to get involved in the GRS community planning process.

Early in 1974 a statewide coalition was formed to press for changes in General Relief (GR). The coalition lobbied for written policies and procedures, oversight by the Department of Health and Social Services and specifying the rights and responsibilities of recipients. In 1977 the League lobbied for state aid for general relief expenditures in counties choosing a county-wide relief system and continued to support those provisions. In 1985 the budget included a program for the gradual state assumption of part of general relief costs along with mandatory payment levels.

In the 1980's economic conditions led to a great increase in the income maintenance caseload at a time of declining state revenues. As a result, payment levels fell far behind the rate of inflation and in spite of heavy lobbying by League and other groups, little progress was made in keeping benefit levels at even bare subsistence levels. In 1987 the governor used the line item veto to make an actual cut of 6% in benefits as passed by the legislature. The savings were used to fund state jobs training programs in a few counties. The League had opposed the cut throughout the budget process.

In 1988 the League also opposed the cut in benefits to a family with a teenager who is not attending school on a regular basis (Learnfare). Opposition was based on the national position that benefits should not be cut in any new program, that payments should be uniform and that without additional funding for special programs for the teens, the program would not work.

The national position on meeting basic human needs encourages self-sufficiency. To promote that position the League supported education and job training programs for people on income assistance. League stressed that the training lead to jobs providing adequate income to help a family to become independent. League also opposed the action of the department of Health and Social Services to limit recipients to two years of college education as a means of fulfilling the job training requirement, even though the educational costs were covered by grants and loans obtained by clients on their own.

A number of changes occurred in the income maintenance system in the late 1980's and early 1990's. In addition to Learnfare, additional benefits were provided for mothers who marry. League questioned its effectiveness, but supported it because the provisions of the AFDC program discouraged marriage. League opposed a two-tiered system, which gave lower benefits to AFDC recipients moving from other states because there was no good evidence that higher payments were drawing people to Wisconsin and because payment levels were already inadequate.

Pilot programs called “Work Not Welfare” were instituted in 1994 and became the basis for a complete overhaul of the welfare system, passed into law in 1996. The new program removed assistance from entitlement status, requiring that recipients fulfill a number of requirements aimed at making them self-sufficient and limiting to two years the time a participant could remain on the program as well as a five-year limit on lifetime
participation. It provided child care assistance, job readiness training and other services to assist the participant in getting a job. League supported the underlying philosophy but objected to many of the implementation provisions: high co-payments for child care and health care were unrealistic for low income families, the lack of real job training that would lead to jobs paying a living wage, the lack of cash assistance when jobs are not available, the requirement that women go to work 12 weeks after child birth, the lack of provision for evaluation of the program, and many others. League lobbied hard in conjunction with the Policy Group on Welfare Reform to correct some of these problems without much success.

W-2 was fully instituted in 1997. Co-payments were reduced for child care, although they are still too high. There is little evidence so far about how well the program is working, because no evaluation of the program was provided and no one knows what has happened to those AFDC recipients who never joined the program, or who joined and have since left it.

**Support Services**

Also in line with the national income maintenance and basic human needs positions, the state League feels that supportive services should be available - but not compulsory - for participants in income assistance programs or for those whose physical, mental or emotional condition prevents them from being self-sufficient. For many years, activity was largely in support of day care services and family planning services. The League worked for removal of restrictions on the sale of contraceptives and for the expanded assistance in family planning by the Department of Health and Social Services.

Activities in the 1970's included support of the Foster Grandparent program, distribution of information on Supplemental Security Income, gathering of information on nursing home codes, the Food Stamp program and the supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), including greater outreach. The League opposed overly strict requirements for day care centers.

In 1980, the decline in state revenues led to a fear that the legislature would seriously cut social services and that those services without a vocal constituency would be the most vulnerable. The League took the lead in forming the Wisconsin Difference Coalition, to work together to ensure a fair level of funding for all the needed services. The coalition provided extensive educational materials about services and lobbied for funding for all. In 1989, the coalition zeroed in on the funding of Community Aids, the basic allocation for counties for funding human service programs, which had received little increased funding for ten years and had lost ground to inflation. Services at the county level were being eroded or funded through the property tax. A heavy, well-organized lobbying effort to achieve a 6% increase was successful. The League's role in this effort had a large influence on its success.

Part of the W-2 program was a major expansion of support services and considerably more money was provided for them. However, the introduction of a less regulated form of day care, which required less training for workers, was opposed by the League in addition to the high co-payments required. In 1997, League supported a bill requiring training for child care workers. It also would have allowed W-2 parents to remain at home until their children were one year old. The bill died in committee. Other services, such as transportation assistance and job training, are not guaranteed.

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**LENDING INDUSTRY PRACTICES**

Support of:

- **Provisions to provide consumers accurate and complete information on the costs of loans (terms, interest, fees and penalties).** Consumers would benefit if provided information about other financial options.
- **Provisions for all lenders to implement a tracking system to enable shared information on monitoring of loans; preventing overuse of rollovers and concurrent loans.** Lenders should be encouraged to assist in providing consumer education.
Efforts of municipalities in Wisconsin to use the avenues available to regulate non-chartered lending businesses. The Milwaukee Task Force on Convenient Lending recommendations are reasonable standards.

- Encouraging chartered financial institutions to maintain a presence in low to moderate income areas.
- State and federal regulations for the most important elements of consumer protection in the form of limits on interest, term, rollovers, amount and number of concurrent loans.

At Convention in 2007, delegates unanimously voted for concurrence and adoption of the convenient lending practices position below as developed and approved by the League of Women Voters of Milwaukee County in May 2007.

Note: Chartered financial institutions cover banks, savings & loans and credit unions. Convenient lenders are not regulated or chartered.

HEALTH CARE

Support of:

A health care system which is financially and geographically accessible to the residents of the state. Where problems exist, the state should work in concert with individuals, and public and private organizations at local, state and national levels to rectify those conditions which make services inaccessible to some residents.

Selective state involvement in activities to increase the availability of basic health care services in under-served areas. For example, the state should work with local community groups to attract health care providers to under served areas.

State government involvement in a coordinated information/referral service dealing with available health care services. State involvement should be tied into existing county or agency networks and should not duplicate systems already in place.

A public health system with responsibility shared by both state and local governments. State government should identify a limited number of basic public health services which must be provided by local units of government; localities could augment these services to suit community needs. The state should assist in financing public health services; at a minimum state financial support should be made available for mandated services.

A continued state role in the health insurance field to include consumer education and some regulation of benefit offerings. State government has a major role to play in educating the public about the advantages and disadvantages of different forms of health insurance. It should take action to encourage employers to offer both traditional and alternative forms of health insurance (such as health maintenance organizations) so that individuals may select the health insurance best suited to their needs. The state should continue to require that health insurance sold in the state offer a limited number of essential benefits to ensure that basic health services are covered no matter what plan is selected.

State government involvement in the development of a program of health insurance for the uninsured. State government should develop ways to provide coverage for uninsured residents. Any state program of health insurance should be designed to meet the needs of a broad segment of residents, including individuals who are unable to purchase health insurance at a reasonable percentage of family income.

State regulation of health care in Wisconsin to protect citizens and to contain costs.

Selective state regulation of hospitals and hospital use. The state should continue its Capital Expenditure Review Program for hospitals. It should continue to inform citizens about hospital rates in Wisconsin. State government health care programs should permit non-hospital treatment where
other settings are more cost-effective as long as quality of care is maintained.

State regulation of licensure of health care professionals. The state should continue to insure public health, safety, and welfare through licensure of health care professionals. State government should investigate setting standards for currently unlicensed professionals when licensure might enhance safety and reduce costs to consumers.

State government oversight in payment systems to assure availability of cost-effective choices to consumers. In state-mandated health care programs, payment systems should define covered health care services without reference to type of licensed provider. The state should require private insurance contracts to include coverage for some licensed non-physicians' services to reduce costs and to improve accessibility and availability of health care services.

A state role in aiding individuals to make cost-effective and humane choices in health care. Legislation on living wills should be expanded to include nutrition and hydration as medical treatment which can be refused in advance. Legislation on living wills should be extended to allow for withdrawal/withholding life sustaining treatment in the event of permanent vegetative state. The state should serve as a resource agency for individuals and organizations by providing information about extraordinary treatments available; it should assist in the maintenance of organ networks and registries. The state should promote the use of hospital ethics committees to help patients, families, and staff in difficult decisions and to reduce use of the courts.

Active state government involvement in programs which emphasize prevention. The state should allocate monies to programs that promote health and prevent disease.

In adopting positions on access and containment of costs in health care in 1986-87, members supported the view that state government's role in under-served areas would not generally include direct provision or financing of services. In supporting state government involvement in a program of health insurance for the uninsured, members expressed a preference for the state working with private insurers and for including individuals who are uninsurable for medical reasons or who are employed by firms that do not offer health insurance as a fringe benefit. Members also expressed concern that a state program for the uninsured did not encourage employers to eliminate health care benefits.

Members preferred a balance between competition and regulation. A number supported state regulation in the setting of hospital rates, including review of hospital policies to provide compensated community care. A number of Leagues reported that their members were interested in having the state investigate setting standards for and licensing lay midwives, speech therapists, and respiratory therapists. Containment of costs calls for emphasis on competence and efficiency. The state should avoid exclusive allocation of functions so the occupational groups may function in all areas where they are qualified by training to provide services. Payment systems and health insurance plans should provide the health care consumer choice in selecting the type of health care professional, provided care rendered is within the professional's lawful scope of practice.

Members supported state government facilitation of timely access to available organs but not decision-making about who gets the organs. They supported establishment of hospital ethics committees but saw no state involvement in the decisions of those committees. All Leagues supported a stronger state role in prevention programs to attain long-range savings in health care.

During the 1987 legislative session, the League supported pilot programs for the State Health Insurance Plan and efforts to increase funding for prevention programs. Insurance issues were introduced in 1991 as part of health care reform but were defeated.
In 1986, when welfare benefits were reduced, Wisconsin lost eligibility for participation in an expanded program providing medical care for low-income pregnant women and children under 6. In its place a limited program called Healthy Start was established for pregnant women and children under one year. The League opposed the welfare cut under its welfare and support services positions, in part because of the loss of the health care funds. Since that time, it has supported expansion of the program under its health care positions. In 1990, the federal government made Wisconsin eligible for federal funds and the number of pregnant women and children receiving health care increased.

School-linked health clinics were supported in 1989-90 to reach young people who cannot afford or do not seek private health care. Opposition came from those who object to providing contraceptive information or devices to teens. League and other supporters cited the experience of cities in other states showing that reproductive health care was a very small part of the services rendered whereas physical examinations, nutrition education, dietary supplements and similar services are the major benefit. The bill did not pass.

In 1985, a Legislative Council Study Committee proposal was adopted containing a number of provisions intended to reduce teen pregnancy. Using our Social Policy provisions, League supported the establishment of the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Board, which grants funds to non-profit organizations providing appropriate services. It also increased the funding for the Human Growth and Development (sex education) program in the schools.

In 1992, further proposals to prevent teen pregnancy were offered but not adopted. In 1995 most prevention programs, except for the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Services Board, were eliminated.

The governor attempted to make health care a part of W-2 welfare reform, making medical assistance a part of the services offered to participants who met the requirements and followed the rules. Co-payments would be required. Because welfare would no longer an entitlement under W-2, the federal government would not grant the necessary waivers for the use of Medicaid funds. In 1997, a plan called BadgerCare was offered, but again the federal government would not provide the waivers. Even though the new program was open to all low-income families with children, who do not have employer-sponsored health insurance, it did not meet federal government standards. The League has concerns about the levels of co-payment and the mandatory withholding of premiums.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The 1979 convention directed the LWVWI Board, under the Human Resources positions, to draft guidelines for action in the area of domestic violence. Local League members can play a significant role in establishing and supporting services for victims of domestic violence in the community. Leagues can help create citizen awareness and understanding of the problem. Guidelines for action adopted in 1979 are:

- Establish that physical violence among individuals in a domestic setting is no less a crime than in any other relationship and requires special enforcement provisions and victim compensation;
- Require law enforcement officers to receive training in domestic relations problems and causes and handling emergencies;
- Promote community responsibility for long-range remedies;
- Appropriate funds to develop, assist, and coordinate community services.

At Council in 1982, the League modified the position to include children, the elderly and other persons living in domestic situations. In the past several years, the legislature has established a Council on Domestic Abuse to monitor needs and propose programs. Funding has also been provided for shelters in the state.

In 1992, League supported a bill allowing victims of domestic violence to have an advocate with them in a court proceeding.
In 1996, League supported revisions in the Children’s Code giving paramount consideration to the best interests of the child. It defines needs of children, seeks preservation of the family unit, and includes definitions of neglect, emotional damage, abuse and reasonable discipline. As a follow-up to this, in 1997 League supported the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) program which would provide family-focused programs for parents to prevent child abuse. The program was included in the biennial budget.

MENTAL HEALTH

Support of:
Adequate funding for community support programs in order to provide adequate mental health care services for persons with mental illness in Wisconsin.

Community-based care when it meets the treatment needs of the client as a cost-effective alternative to institutional care. We believe treatment should be eligible for federal funding in addition to current state and local funding. The need to expand existing community-based services—especially in the area of case management service to meet consumer needs and with an emphasis on specialized housing.

State-mandated benefits requiring private insurance companies to provide funding for community-based programs for the mentally ill. We believe that insurance companies should provide payments for participation in these programs, equally as they do for other types of in-patient and outpatient treatment.

Coordinated community-based mental health services for children and adolescents with emphasis on early treatment and prevention. In a well-coordinated delivery system, professional information would be shared, ensuring that duplication of services does not occur while client confidentiality is protected.

A civil commitment law which provides that in order to be civilly committed an individual must be: Mentally ill, drug or alcohol dependent, or developmentally disabled, and a “proper subject for treatment” and dangerous as defined by paragraph 51.20(1)(a) Wis. Stats. The four criteria for dangerousness are:

1) Probability of harm to self shown by recent threats or attempts at suicide or serious bodily harm.

2) Probability of physical harm to others as shown by recent violent behavior or threats placing others in reasonable fear of harm.

3) Probability of physical impairment or injury due to impaired judgment shown by a recent pattern of behavior.

4) Probability of serious physical harm because mental illness impairs the ability to satisfy basic needs. [See 51.20 (1) (a) 2.a,b,c,d, Wis. Stats.]

We believe the enforcement of the “dangerousness standard” allows early intervention when judges and attorneys are educated and trained to uniformly and consistently apply mental health law.

Measures to assure prompt identification of incarcerated persons with mental illness, including comprehensive training of jail personnel in recognition and care of persons with mental illness, assessment and jail diversion decisions by qualified staff, and appropriate treatment whether in jail or another facility.

The mental health position was adopted by the League in 1991 after a two year study. There has been little activity in the area either by League members or by the legislature since then.
COMMUNITY POLICY
(formerly Urban Policy)

Promote the fiscal, social, cultural, residential, educational and environmental quality of life for all residents. Recognizing that the League has a national Urban Policy position, the state League’s Urban Policy position was updated in 2016 with the idea that Leagues across the state would use portions of the policy as they deem applicable.

Support of the following positions and measures:

State, county and local governments should develop complementary policies to improve 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 young workers;
- consolidated governmental services;
- investments to increase the tax base;
- subsidies that enable and expand affordable housing near community 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, including wired and wireless communication networks;
- 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;
- 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 declining and/or distressed Wisconsin communities.

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 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 all Leagues would use portions of the policy as they deem applicable. Updated position was adopted by delegates at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

LOCAL ACTION OPTIONS

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Local Leagues can develop community understanding and support for the merit selection of judges. They can observe their local courts, evaluating the need for more staff, prosecutors, city attorneys, public defenders, and legal services. They can monitor jury selection. League members can also build support for community-based corrections by educating the community at large as well as other League members about local facilities. Go and see tours or informal talk sessions with participants in such a facility are possibilities. Leagues can also set up panels and forums which include people from all parts of the criminal justice system to inform the community about its operation. Leagues may monitor training opportunities for law enforcement personnel, the hiring of women and minorities by law enforcement agencies, and the provision of legal services for needy defendants. Juvenile facilities can be evaluated following the position guidelines and the federal mandates. League members can monitor court disposition of juveniles and the programs provided for community-based disposition. They can encourage cooperation among agencies dealing with youth to make prevention and treatment programs more effective.

CITIZENS’ RIGHTS

Members need to be aware of provisions of the state anti-discrimination law and be alert to instances of discrimination at the local level. They can monitor housing, public accommodations, etc. and support local ordinances which protect the rights of various protected groups. They can provide local communities with information that will help discourage discriminatory behavior.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

There is room for support of a short ballot for county officials (that is, eliminating clerk, treasurer, register of deeds, sheriff, surveyor, clerk of the court and coroner from the ballot). By examining budgets, Leagues can determine if the county is assuming responsibility for countywide services, such as libraries, centers for the elderly and other supportive services.
EDUCATION

Local Leagues can show their concern about anti-discrimination and anti-poverty efforts in the schools by monitoring: enforcement of human relations programs; elimination of discrimination because of race, sex, marital status, disability, or receipt of public assistance; and implementation of the federally required committees established under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act and the Johnson-O'Malley Act (Bureau of Indian Affairs). Local Leagues can support aid programs to special children - physically and mentally handicapped, the gifted, and those with learning disabilities. They can monitor local districts’ compliance with the standards established by the Department of Public Instruction. They can seek continuing evaluation of the "Choice" program in Milwaukee. They can make sure that citizen participation is encouraged in school policy decisions.

GOVERNMENT FINANCING

Local Leagues may support and encourage the county board to adopt countywide assessment or the position of county assessor.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

Local Leagues should check to see whether local government districts, wards, precincts, etc., have equal population according to the most recent census. Leagues should be aware of boundary changes and annexation plans in their areas so that the welfare of the area as a whole is the prime consideration. Members can monitor the election process and offer to help municipal clerks in registration at the polls. Local Leagues should know the provisions of the open meetings law and see that local governmental bodies are complying with both the letter and the spirit of the law.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Local Leagues can take action on the location of sanitary landfills, variances granted in shoreland zoning, drainage projects, proposals for expenditure of federal revenue sharing funds, wetland protection ordinances, and sediment control ordinances. They may monitor local industries to see that they are conforming to air quality standards. They can work to establish collection centers for recycling and participate in local recycling planning efforts. They can encourage waste source reduction through local education efforts, including mandatory deposit on returnable bottles and cans. Local League members can practice and promote energy conservation, remembering that implementation must take full account of economic consequences, distribute costs and hardships as fairly as possible without bearing unduly on the poor, and give full consideration to the environment. Local Leagues can also explore what their communities and regions are doing about land use planning. League members can observe land use planning functions and present testimony, using national and state positions. Construction of nuclear power plants may be opposed until questions regarding safety and disposal are answered satisfactorily.

SOCIAL POLICY

Local Leagues can continue to inform their communities about social policy issues. They can monitor local government actions, watching particularly for the required citizen participation. Local League members can monitor human relations and human growth and development programs in local schools, public and private, to see that they comply with federal and state laws. They should strongly support and monitor programs affecting the disadvantaged: job training programs, Learnfare, day care, food stamps,
WIC, and other welfare and social services. They may work to ensure citizen participation on public welfare and human services advisory boards and committees. Leagues in the state may wish to work to see that as broad range of community services is provided so that no population in need is left out. Local Leagues should also monitor the county budget process to see that counties are meeting state requirements on human services expenditures and that evaluation of programs, especially welfare programs, are effective. They may also wish to make sure that human services have high priority in federal revenue sharing allocations.

COMMUNITY POLICY

Local Leagues can monitor local programs in housing, education and job training to see that they complement measures to enhance the community's economic base and create and preserve productive, self-reliant neighborhoods and communities.