



Where We Stand

2021-2023

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LWVChicago.org
332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 634, Chicago, IL 60604
League@LWVChicago.org
312-939-5949

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MISSION

To encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influence public policy through education and advocacy.

PRINCIPLES

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CHICAGO BELIEVES:

- in representative government and the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States;
- that democratic government depends on 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 meetings, and making public records accessible;
- that every citizen's right to the vote should be protected;
- that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all;
- that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination;
- 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;
- that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people;
- that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation;
- that government should promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest;
- that government should share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the public welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems;
- 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.

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

The Organization of the League of Women Voters parallels that of government with national, state, county and local bodies. Leagues at each level adopt a program. All programs are based on the **Principles**, which are “concepts of government” adopted by the membership at the national level. The Principles are outlined on page ii. In addition to being consistent with the **Principles**, a **Program Position** must be one that:

- Can be solved by government action;
- Meets a current need or interest;
- Can be influenced by effective citizen action; and ☐ Is appropriate for action at that League level.

The LWV Chicago Program is made up of governmental issues chosen by consensus of the membership. Published in Where We Stand each biennium the entire Program is completely reviewed. Local units have first action on the issues. Individual program items as presently worded must be retained or dropped. If an item is dropped, action may not be taken by the LWV on that item. The positions have been adopted over many years, and some of them do not seem to speak to “meets current need or interest.” A request for update may be made on one or more of the items. Local units may also suggest new items. A compilation of the consensus of the local units is made, and the Board determines whether there is need for change. The suggested version with proposed “items for update” is sent out to the members in time for consideration at the annual meeting where the members will then adopt, by consensus, the entire program for the coming biennium.

- A new item may require a **study**, which is done by the membership, researching the issues and providing a **position** to be adopted at the following biennial meeting.
- A Chicago League Committee may, after careful researching, **provide a position for adoption by Concurrence** (agreement with). Such **positions** also will go to the following biennial meeting.
- **Positions to be updated** usually go to the appropriate committee for researching and updating to bring into line with today’s needs. Again any final changes in wording go to the entire membership at the following biennial meeting.

Thus the entire membership has an opportunity to be included in the consensus which determines program positions.

Adopted positions may be prioritized to identify the most pressing issues and commit to focusing attention on those issues. Coordinated actions are taken in support of **Positions** by the Board members, units and individual members. Actions may include lobbying, educating the public, testifying or forming or joining coalitions or acting individually.

A League member does not have to agree with all of the LWV positions, but if the member intends to speak, write or lobby on an issue where the member disagrees with the LWV position, the member must not use the LWV name in any such activity. Updated April, 2019

CHICAGO WHERE WE STAND 2021

The following list of position statements from LWV Chicago differs from previous ones. To provide perspective on the relationship between LWV Chicago positions and those of LWVUS and League of Women Voters of Illinois, position statements have been grouped in the same order and under the same headings that appear in LWVUS' *Impact on Issues Guide to Public Policy Positions*. As a result, *Where We Stand 2019* presents LWV Chicago's public policy statements in the following general categories: Representative Government, Citizens' Rights, Government Structure, Natural Resources, Social Policy, Meeting Basic Human Needs and Fiscal Policy. In addition to LWV Chicago positions each category has a summary policy statement from LWVUS and LWVIL, when applicable.

WHERE WE STAND

LWV CHICAGO POSITIONS 2021

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

ELECTION LAWS

LWVUS: Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

LWVIL: Support uniform election laws and procedures to provide stability and continuity of governance and produce a legislature that addresses the problems of society effectively.

LWV CHICAGO: CITY COUNCIL ELECTION

Position: *Aldermen should continue to be elected on a nonpartisan ballot from single-member districts (wards); all 50 should be elected at the same time for four-year terms. Upon the resignation or declaration of vacancy in the position of an alderman for more than half a term, an election shall be held. If feasible, this election shall be combined with the next scheduled election. (This position was adopted in 1990 and updated in 1995 and 2011.)*

DISTRICTING

LWVUS: Support vesting the responsibility for redistricting in an independent special commission, with membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups and members of minority groups.

LWVIL: Support a redistricting process that is timely, orderly and meets basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

LWV CHICAGO: DISTRICTING

Position: *In election years immediately following a federal census, aldermanic elections should not be held until ward boundaries are redrawn in conformity with population figures, to avoid having a four-year term with districts not representative of the population. (This position was adopted in 1996.)*

CITIZENS' RIGHTS

CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO KNOW/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

LWVUS: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

LWV CHICAGO: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND ACCESS

Position: *Freedom of expression must be guaranteed. All franchises should provide equal services. A minimum number of public access channels should be required. Subscriber privacy must be protected. Monitoring a subscriber's line, including the home, except for action necessary for service, billing or delivery should be prohibited unless the subscriber*

agrees to such monitoring. There should be stiff penalties for violations. (This position was adopted in 1982 and updated in 1995.)

LWV CHICAGO: PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Position: The Chicago Public Library System should provide resources and services to meet the educational, research, informational, cultural and recreational needs of Chicago residents. An adequate budget must be available. An increase in property taxes should be provided and other governmental and private resources should be sought. The League supports one central library with an adequate and well-maintained collection staffed by professional librarians and well-trained support staff using modern technology. The collection should be the primary source for information in the humanities, science and business and the primary source to supplement branch libraries. Community participation in library decisions, lobbying and fund-raising by support groups should be encouraged. (This position was adopted in 1987 and updated in 1995.)

BRANCH LIBRARIES: Each branch library should meet the special interests of its community, cooperate with neighboring schools, provide programs for children and assistance to parents selecting children's literature and serve the business community. Branch libraries should offer outreach programs to the foreign-born, the handicapped and homebound, and the aged and new residents. Appropriate programs include: adult literacy, English as a second language, General Education Development (GED), Great Books, senior activities, citizenship and voter service. Funding priority should be given to meeting the basic needs of existing branches before new branches are added. Branch libraries should be empowered to provide services that reflect their unique communities, be widely available, both in physical location and hours of operation, and offer access to the Internet and computers, to constituents.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

LWVUS: Support structures and practices of government characterized by openness, accountability, representativeness, decision-making ability and effective performance.

LWVIL: Support efficient and effective operation of government.

LWV CHICAGO: CITY GOVERNMENT

Position: Chicago should have a mayor-council form of government. As provided in the Illinois Compiled Statutes, a definite line of succession must be retained to provide continuity in case of the death or incapacity of the mayor. The mayor should be elected on a partisan ballot for a four-year term. (This position was adopted in 1976 and has been updated in, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995.)

LWV CHICAGO: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Position: The mayor should be freed for policy-making by assistants who coordinate the city's departments and agencies. An agency in the mayor's office should be charged with making long-term policy decisions, and an annual digest of its reports and recommendations should be published. The policy-making process should be open to public input, including neighborhood meetings. (This position was adopted in 1976.)

A chief administrative officer should oversee administration, and this position, its qualifications and functions should be spelled out in an ordinance. This officer should be required to have previous administrative experience and should be appointed by the mayor with confirmation by the City Council.

City department heads should have responsibility for administering their departments, with overall supervision by the mayor's office. The mayor with the approval of the City Council should appoint them. A time limit should be set for the appointment and confirmation of department heads when a vacancy exists.

LWV CHICAGO: CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES

Position: *The City Council should meet at a regularly set time. The mayor should be the presiding officer; in his or her absence, a president pro tem elected by the council should preside. The City Council should be a primarily legislative body. Aldermen and committees should be relieved of administrative detail so they can exercise legislative oversight. The City Council should make policy about but should not deal with individual cases of administrative issues such as specific loading zones, traffic lights, permits, abatements of fees, claims, etc. On such matters, aldermen should refer requests to the appropriate departments for action and exercise oversight of departmental performance but not introduce individual ordinances. (This position was adopted in 1974 and updated in 1991.)*

Committees: *Committee structure should group like matters together and should be coordinated with the responsibilities of city departments (but there should not be a committee for each department). Before budget hearings, each committee should review the departments for which it is responsible. The workload of committees should be distributed as evenly as possible among the committees. Chairs should be elected by the committees. Committees should meet on a regular schedule. Two or three committee members should be able to convene a meeting and place items on the agenda. City Council committees should provide timely advance notice of their meetings through broadcast and press media and internet. Committee meetings and votes should be recorded and reported. Testimony at committee meetings should be made part of a permanent record available to the public. All committees should have line-item budgets similar to the present (2004) finance committee budget. This budget should include employees of the committee.*

The Council should adopt a method of bringing a bill out of committee for consideration on the Council floor. When an item under consideration contains several distinct propositions (e.g., appointment of two school board members as a single package), one or two aldermen should be able to move a division of such a proposal for voting on each separately. [As of 1989, these provisions have been included in the City Council's Rules of Order.]

The City Council Journal of Proceedings should be available to aldermen and the public at least 48 hours before the next meeting. The Journal of Proceedings should be indexed. Summaries of debate sufficient to indicate legislative intent of proponents and reasons for opposition of opponents should be included. Matters passed as a group, as in the Omnibus Ordinance, should be indicated as such in the journal. To reduce the size and expense of the journal and make it more useful as a reference for the citizen, a way should be sought to publish in other documents of record (readily available to aldermen and to the public) the repetitive identical content of leases, contracts, bond issues, etc.

LWV CHICAGO: CITY PLANNING

Position: *There should be an agency to undertake long-range planning, including coordinated planning at the departmental level, intergovernmental planning, research data collection and evaluation, graphic services including map updating and maintenance, and public information. (This position was adopted in 1997.)*

PRIVATIZATION

LWVUS: Believes that when governmental entities consider the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector, the community impact and goals of such transfers must be identified and considered. Transparency, accountability and preservation of the common good must be ensured.

LWV CHICAGO: PRIVATIZATION

Position: Contracting with the private sector is an appropriate way to provide city services in cases where it will reduce costs and/or improve services; where skills, used infrequently, are required; or to permit rapid initiation of new projects without large investments in personnel or fixed assets. Any privatization of city assets or services shall be done only after investigation of savings and costs of such privatization and with adequate time and opportunity for public comments. Except in extraordinary circumstances, it should be used only when there are enough potential contractors to provide competition and in cases where contracts can be detailed and specific. Contracting out should not be used as a means of bypassing labor unions and should not be at the expense of fair and safe working conditions or equal opportunity employment. Contracts should ensure equal access to services. In determining the comparative costs of contracting as opposed to performing work in house, the costs of negotiating and writing the contract and monitoring the work on the private sector side and the costs of fringe benefits, pensions and capital investments on the city side should be figured into calculations. Competition for contracts should be open to public scrutiny. Contractors should not be permitted to make campaign contributions. (This position was adopted in 1992 and updated in 2011.)

NATURAL RESOURCES

LWVUS: Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and management of natural resources in the public interest. Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

LWVIL: Support a comprehensive land use policy that provides for orderly growth while preserving the environment, conserving natural resources and providing needed green space.

LWV CHICAGO: LAND USE

LAKEFRONT LAND USE

Position: The lakefront should be used exclusively for public recreation, consistent with and enhancing its natural beauty of the lakefront. The planning guidelines should follow the concept of linear park development (the 1968 City Council commissioned Johnson, Johnson & Roy Report), ensuring adequate pedestrian access to the parks and lakefront and leaving the lakefront free of obstacles such as buildings and roads. (This position was adopted in 1970.) The League opposes an airport in Lake Michigan.

PARKS

Position: Parks should be used for public recreation only, consistent with and enhancing their aesthetic quality. Buildings should be kept to a minimum. Funds should be distributed equitably for maintenance and development of parks throughout the city. (This position was adopted in 1973.)

SPORTS STADIUM

Position: The League opposes use of public funds to subsidize construction or operation of a sports complex. It opposes any form of financing that lessens tax revenues. This includes subsidy for construction or for infrastructure, such as the use of general obligation bonds. (This position was adopted in 1978.)

SOCIAL POLICY

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

EDUCATION

LWVUS: Support policies that provide equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.

LWVIL: Support a system of high-quality elementary and secondary schools for all children in Illinois, which provides for local control of school program and budget.

LWV CHICAGO: CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Position: *The League strongly supports universal, compulsory education within the ages of 5- 18 and stresses the need for inclusion to meet the diverse range of needs. The League supports the meaningful use of student proficiency tests for diagnosis and remediation. Increased financial support is needed, especially increased state and federal aid. (Both the national and state Leagues support increased aid to education.)*

Charter Schools: *The League of Women Voters of Chicago supports a moratorium on new charter schools and networks, additional charter campuses within an existing network and new contract schools under the Chicago Board of Education until there is accountability and transparency in the finances and operations of these schools. Including*

- *Potential conflicts of interest of members of the governing board,*
- *Sources of revenue,*
- *Salaries and benefit packages,*
- *The identity of the owner of any property and buildings, and*
- *Admission and exit processes*

In addition, the financial impact of charter schools on traditional public schools must be evaluated. (2015) in advance of opening.

Regular disclosure of all financial arrangements, particularly with the Public Building Commission, is mandatory. Leases with the Public Building Commission must provide protection to the Board if the buildings are unsatisfactory.

Principals and School Leadership Team: Principals should select their teachers and staff, prepare a school budget and have use of the discretionary fund as approved by the local school council. The school leadership team should have support and opportunities for professional growth as well as exhibit accountability. Principals should consult with teachers to choose textbooks from an approved citywide list.

Quality and Equality: There should be improved facilities, programs, policies and innovative plans to provide both quality and equality of educational opportunity for all students, including integration of students and faculty. Public schools should provide the foundation for workforce development and readiness to be successful in the digital and information society we now have. The League supports teacher certification, assignment, transfer and tenure policies flexible enough to allow faculty integration, encourage innovative instruction and ensure qualified and dedicated teachers in every school. Learning environments should be physically and psychologically positive and provide an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning. Pupil-teacher ratios should accommodate the diverse needs of each school. Professional and auxiliary personnel should be assigned to maximize the effectiveness of the school program with state-of-the-art materials and equipment provided for each school. There should be incentives for working in high need areas. Teacher diversity must be a stated priority.

School Governance: The League of Women Voters of Chicago believes that the Chicago Board of Education should be structured to be accountable, transparent and provide effective oversight and meaningful community

engagement. The League of Women Voters of Chicago believes that whatever method is chosen to select the members of the Chicago Board of Education, there are *secondary issues that should be addressed in the following manner: (This position was adopted in 2016.)*

A. Type of Governance:

- *If governed by an elected Board of Education, the majority of members should be elected from geographical districts. Board of Education members should represent the diversity of race, ethnicity, and background of the families of the Chicago Public Schools.*
- *If governed by a board appointed by the Mayor of Chicago, Chicago should return to the practice of a districtwide nominating commission.*
- *If governed by a hybrid board, with some members elected and some appointed by the mayor, the majority of members should be elected from geographical districts.*

B. Search/Oversight:

- *There should be a search committee to locate candidates for the position of CEO/Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, no matter which method of selecting board members is used. A committee formed for the purpose of conducting a nation-wide candidate search for candidates for CEO/Superintendent should include members from community groups, parent groups, the principal's association, and the Chicago Teachers Union.*
 - *To improve oversight, the Board of Education should have the primary role in selecting a Chief Executive Officer/Superintendent, no matter which method of selecting board members is used.*
 - *To provide accountability and to restore trust there should be an independent finance and audit committee that reports to the Board of Education, no matter which method of selecting board members is used. C.*
- Community Engagement:**

- *To engage the community in a meaningful way, there should be a district-wide advisory council to advise the board on facilities utilization and school closings. The Advisory Council should have diversity that represents the district, and should include educators as well as lay persons.*
- *The Board of Education should determine community preference for the type of schools to be located within that community.*

The terms of Board of Education members should be staggered. The League supports compensation of members, at least for expenses.

Local School Councils are the Chicago Board of Education's form of school-based management mandated by State Law. LWV Chicago supports the concept of Local School Councils. The Council's role should be advisory, except in the area of hiring the principal, discretionary funds, additions to the Student Code of Conduct and the School Improvement Plan. A Local School Council should maintain at least 51% parent members, the principal may be a voting member, the size of the council should reflect the size of the neighborhood school. For magnet schools and magnet programs some variation may be necessary. More teacher representation should be provided at the high school level, and students should be included on these Councils as well. Parents who are employed at a school should not be eligible to be parent representatives, but parents employed at another site of the Chicago Board of Education should be allowed to be parent representatives. Parent/community involvement in charter/contract schools is also supported. (This position was adopted in 2011.)

Integration: Metropolitan integration would be ideal but seems unlikely. The League supports busing and selective enrollment schools, among the many ways to make quality education available to all children. The long-range goal should be neighborhood integration through changing of housing patterns. Leadership should enforce laws to prevent racial isolation, upgrade education, and provide opportunities to achieve the cultural competency of administrators, staff, and students.

Facilities and Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation, maintenance and construction needs are immense. Plans, criteria and priorities must be compatible with desegregation, equal opportunities, preservation of housing and quality of education and they must be made public. Decision-making must include local and district councils and instructional staff. Innovative buildings must be staffed with trained personnel. (These positions were updated in 2019.)

LWV CHICAGO: CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO

Position: The League's longstanding concerns with public education include monitoring the legislatively mandated missions of the City Colleges of Chicago to include consideration of how adequately and equitably funding resources are allocated. City Colleges shall cooperate with the Chicago Board of Education, business and industry to develop internship and other cooperative programs wherever feasible. Until such time as City College students no longer need remedial courses, such courses should be the responsibility of the City Colleges. (This position was adopted in 1985 and updated in 2011.)

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

INCOME ASSISTANCE

LWVUS: Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter.

LWVIL: Support income assistance and supportive services for all low-income individuals and families, primarily influenced by the federal government with secondary state funding.

LWV CHICAGO: LIVING WAGE REQUIREMENT

Position: The League of Women Voters of Chicago supports the campaign for a living wage to be required for work involved in publicly funded projects. With the advent of the \$15 minimum wage, which became law in Illinois in 2019, the requirement for a living wage may be extended to the private sector as well. The wage is to be adjusted for increases in the cost of living. (This position was adopted in 1997.)

HOUSING

LWVUS: Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

LWVIL: Support government plans for adequate supplies of low and moderate income housing.

LWV CHICAGO: HOUSING

Condominiums: Strong tenant and consumer protective measures should be included in the city's condominium ordinance to protect both tenants and prospective purchasers. These should include adequate notice of intent to convert together with the property report; information on financing and repairs; developer warranties on major systems and provision for costs of bringing the building into code compliance; the right of a tenant group to purchase the building; relocation assistance; mortgage assistance. Condominium associations should be made up of owners only. (This position was adopted in 1980.)

Fair Housing: National, state and local legislation should prohibit all housing discrimination by real estate salesmen and brokers, lending institutions, residential land developers and owners. Legislation should cover apartments, private homes and vacant land. The public should be educated to create an atmosphere of support for open housing policies. (This position was adopted in 1963 and updated in 1969.)

The League supports: A city commission with power to investigate and initiate complaints; the use of conciliation and mediation to eliminate unfair practices, with recourse to the courts should these fail, and the right to petition the court for injunctive relief with safeguards for both parties; speedy resolution of complaints; educational programs on procedures and responsibilities; adequate funding for these purposes; and continuous evaluation of the programs.

Local government should enforce Fair Housing Laws aggressively and expand educational outreach to property owners, landlords, condo associations, and co-ops as to the rights and obligations of Fair Housing Laws for both landlords and tenants. (This position was adopted in 2009.)

Low and Moderate Income Housing: Nationwide, the League supports programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family, with the federal government assuming primary responsibility. Statewide, the League supports tax incentives to provide an adequate supply of low and moderate income housing. Considerable Chicago League action has been taken under these positions, which included League involvement in the Gautreaux case concerning construction of low income housing. The revised court order from the 1966 Gautreaux Case still governs the CHA's administration of its Scattered-Site Housing Program. (This position was adopted in 2009.)

Though housing for displaced tenants when public housing is demolished is a federal responsibility, the city should actively seek funding for such tenants to be sure none are left homeless. The city should assure that a city agency provides for centrally supervised, uniformly available counseling services and assistance to low income people seeking housing. It should seek to contract to provide such services for agencies such as the CHA which is now required to provide them for their displaced tenants. The city should encourage rehabilitation of existing housing where feasible and where it can be done promptly so that derelict buildings do not become neighborhood hazards.

The city should guarantee and facilitate low interest rehab loans, conditional on personal investment by the rehab person or agency. It should encourage lending agencies to make such loans. The city should encourage the reclaiming of abandoned areas for industrial parks surrounded by mixed-income housing, especially in the case of light industry. This includes brownfields and areas that have been abandoned through demolition or for other reasons. The interests of the environment are consequently served by avoiding the duplication of building of infrastructure and by reducing commuting time for workers employed in industrial parks.

The city should continue to encourage partnerships to create multi-family mixed-income rental units. It should encourage coordination of the requirements and deadlines of public and private funding agencies and set basic rules in order to expedite the process of rebuilding. Planning of city departments should be coordinated with community-based organizations and community representatives to reflect neighborhood priorities, but should assure safeguards against discrimination on account of race or socioeconomic status. (This position was adopted in 2009.)

A city agency should collect reports on the federal monitoring of lending priorities, anti-foreclosure measures, predatory lending, anti-redlining legislation and compliance with the Community Reinvestment Act. Such reports should be submitted to the City Council and made available to the public, with specific information on banks, insurance firms and others doing business in the city of Chicago. (This position was adopted in 2009.)

Developers of housing should be required to set aside low-income units as a condition for doing business in the city. These units should be built and occupied simultaneously with the middle and upper income units. Public housing residents should be required to contribute to their rent, however small the amount.

Multi-Family Rental Housing: *The Chicago League supports property tax exemptions for multi-family rental housing targeted to buildings and/or tenants in particular trouble, but would not seek changes to lower the assessed value of all rental property. LWV Cook County supports retention of a classification system in Cook County, with no further modification until the most recent changes are evaluated. As of 1989, the classification system has included a multifamily building rehabilitation incentive. (This position was adopted in 1989.)*

LWV CHICAGO: HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Position: *A Department of Housing and Neighborhood (Community) Development should administer community development and housing subsidy funds and coordinate services of other departments relating to housing and neighborhood improvement. Services should include: neighborhood commercial and industrial development, housing rehabilitation and technical services, Mortgage counseling, fair housing counseling, urban homesteading, relocation assistance, weatherization assistance and code enforcement. The needs of housing consumers must not be overlooked. This position was adopted in 1997 and 2009.*

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND GUN CONTROL

LWVUS: Support violence prevention programs in communities. 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.

LWVIL: Support legislative controls to stop the proliferation of handgun ownership and irresponsible use and restricted access to automatic and semiautomatic assault-type weapons.

LWV CHICAGO: HANDGUNS

Position: *Both the state and Chicago Leagues support legislation for control of handguns and ammunition. The 1989 Illinois League Convention also voted support for measures to restrict access to semi-automatic assault type weapons. Both Leagues favor federal legislation. The Chicago League supports locally enacted controls for the City of Chicago.*

The League supports a ban on the further manufacture, sale, transportation and importation for private ownership of handguns and their parts. It supports registration, licensing, permits and handgun education, if it is part of the licensing procedures. There should be strict enforcement of handgun laws. The basic causes of handgun violence should be attacked, especially societal factors and lack of public education. (This position was adopted in 1974 and updated in 1976 and 1989.)

FISCAL POLICY

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

LWVIL: Support a diversified revenue system, relying principally on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees, that is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive and simple.

LWV CHICAGO: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE

Position: *The present tax structure is inadequate and fails to provide a stable source of revenue. Statewide, the League supports equitable distribution of the tax burden and increased reliance on the state income tax to relieve sales and property taxes and provide sufficient revenue. The Chicago League supports a change in the present mix of taxes for local government. The sales tax should be reduced and the remaining 2 cent tax on food and drugs should be removed. The local sales tax should not exceed that of neighboring communities. Chicago League consensus did not support*

reduction of the property tax rate levied by the City of Chicago. The League statewide supports improvements in assessment practices.

Casino Gambling: *The Chicago League strongly objects to gambling, particularly casino gambling, as a source of revenue. At the national level, the LWVUS position on urban policy is (in part) to “Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.” Casino gambling in Chicago meets neither criterion. The city’s emphasis should be on a long-term productive economic development policy focusing on family-supporting jobs linked with adequate job training. The Chicago League rejects casino gambling, as a means to improve the quality of urban life or to meet the long-term revenue needs of the city. We accept the studies that predict increased crime, gambling addiction (particularly affecting youth), diversion discretionary income from other forms of entertainment and drastic changes in our city’s image. (This position was adopted in 1984 and updated in 1992.)*

LWV CHICAGO: CITY PENSION FUNDS

Position: *The City of Chicago should have a greater voice in any changes made to the pension funds. Specifically, the City Council should approve any changes in the pension plans before they can be enacted by the state legislature. The source of funding for the pension plans should not be restricted to the property tax, and the level of funding should more closely relate to actuarial requirements in order to reduce the unfunded liability to acceptable levels. The “acceptable” level of funding is defined as funding that meets the current year’s increase in accrued liability plus interest on the unfunded liability. In addition, the city should investigate the pros and cons of participation by city employees in the federal Social Security system. This position was adopted in 1991.*

LWV CHICAGO: CITY BUDGET

Position: *Chicago should have a Municipal Budget Code set forth in an ordinance and incorporating state statutes and city procedures. The budget should present expenditures by program and it should show specific expenditures in lineitem form under each program. It should also include revenue from all sources (including federal and state as well as all local funds) and planned expenditures from all monies. Insofar as practical, the budget should reflect the revenue and expenditures of governmental and quasi- governmental bodies not part of the corporate City of Chicago but which operate within the city.*

A capital budget *should be planned and presented as a separate document; however, it should be considered in conjunction with the operating budget. (This position was adopted in 1974.)*

LWV CHICAGO: BUDGET-MAKING PROCEDURES

Position: *The budget-making process should be scheduled to allow time for pre- budget hearings, department hearings, public hearings, consideration of amendments, and consideration of the budget as a whole. The mayor should present to the City Council an executive budget prepared by the mayor and the budget director early enough to give the council time to deliberate before enacting the annual appropriation ordinance. (This position was adopted in 1974.)*

Pre-budget public hearings *in the neighborhoods as well as downtown should be held before publication to obtain information that may lead to amendment of the budget. The budget calendar, all hearings open to the public and the budget document itself should be publicized; copies of the budget should be available to the public well in advance of hearings. Copies of the document should be available to all aldermen well in advance of council consideration and aldermen should be provided with expert staff.*

Council hearings *with department heads should be held early to allow time for consideration of reports and testimony prior to submission of amendments. Department heads’ testimony should be scheduled with sufficient time for*

questions, and the schedule should be made public in advance of the hearings. Department heads should distribute written reports to the council before the hearings.

***Amendments to the budget** should be submitted in writing and be available to aldermen and the public before action is taken. Provision should be made for public response to amendments.*