

INTRODUCTION

LWVNYS Impact on Issues is a guide for League leaders on the LWVNYS public policy positions. Every two years, local Leagues participate in the LWVNYS program planning process by reviewing existing positions and making recommendations for the future. Member agreement on issues (consensus or concurrence) follows in-depth study and is developed into the formal positions presented in this publication. These positions are the basis for action.

Included is a Summary of LWVNYS Public Policy Positions, the official full LWVNYS position statements in bold type, and the background and actions that have been taken over the years. This document is updated for legislative action as of the end of the 2016 regular legislative session. Some sections have an “Action Taken under LWVUS Positions” section to describe how LWVNYS action has been taken under national positions. Therefore, this guide can be used as a companion book to *LWVUS Impact on Issues* when analyzing what action can be taken on an issue using national positions.

Leagues at the local and Inter-League Organization (ILO) level should use national and state League positions to take action in their own communities. It is the responsibility of the local or ILO League board to determine whether member understanding and agreement exist; whether the specific action to be taken is clearly covered under the position(s); and whether the action makes sense in terms of timing, need and effectiveness. An effective action partnership between national, state and local levels of League will benefit all three.

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LWVNYS Vice President Issues and Advocacy
November 2016

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS **LWVNYS 2016**

In 2016, the state board approved a new position on Juvenile Justice under the Judicial positions. The League of Women Voters of New York State supports legislation to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility to 18 years old. Our position is based on the following beliefs:

1. Children under the age of 18 are not adults and their treatment within the juvenile justice and criminal court system should relate to their stage of development.
2. Children should not be held in adult incarceration facilities.
3. Rehabilitation is the purpose of the juvenile justice system.
4. The legal rights of children should be protected.

ELECTION LAW

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS Support of measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise, including paperless and Election Day registration, no-excuse absentee and in-person early voting. Restore integrity to the election process – specifically support for uniformity in election laws and procedures in their implementation and enforcement; promote measures that ensure the integrity of all ballots; support ballot access and fair campaign practices.

Support comprehensive campaign finance reform, including public financing of campaigns.

Opposition to term limits for members of the NYS Legislature.

Opposition to term limits for NYS statewide elected officials.

Support for continuation of Fusion Voting in New York State whether or not Wilson-Pakula is repealed.

GOVERNMENT

UNDER LWVUS POSITIONS Support of citizen rights, including reproductive rights.

Support of effective regulation of lobbying and ethics.

Support of standards to ensure equitable representation in the State legislature and Congress.

Support of improved measures to provide representation for legislative districts in case of a vacancy.

Support of responsive and responsible legislative processes which increase the role of the individual member and the committee system.

Support of procedural reforms in the constitutional convention process to promote openness and nonpartisanship as positive factors in deciding on support for a constitutional convention.

Support of the consolidation of government/shared services when it promotes effective and efficient operation of government.

HEALTH CARE

Support of measures to assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care, including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective alternative methods of delivery; funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs; provisions for effective citizen participation in health policy decisions.

Support of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their own health and to participate in decisions, including extraordinary life-extending procedures.

Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through public financing with single payer concept as an acceptable approach to implementing League positions on equitable access and cost containment.

JUDICIAL

Support of a unified state court system with improved provisions for judicial selection.

Support of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.

Support of measures to improve pretrial procedures in the criminal courts.

Support of measures to promote a fair and efficient jury system.

Support the rights of indigent defendants to representation at public expense.

Support of alternatives to incarceration.

Opposition to the death penalty, with life without parole as the primary alternative.

Support of legislation to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility to 18 years old.

NATURAL RESOURCES

UNDER LWWUS POSITIONS Support for protection and management of New York's natural resources in the public interest, including energy conservation and energy options from renewable sources.

Support for measures to achieve watershed protection including limiting pesticide use and applying Best Management Practices.

Support for a state-established, intergovernmental system for land resource management.

Support for a proactive role for New York State in regional land use planning, containing urban sprawl and protecting sensitive areas.

Support of reconditioning of the New York State Erie/Barge Canal System and its development for recreational uses.

Support for preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem.

SOCIAL POLICY

UNDER LWWUS POSITIONS Support for equality of opportunity, meeting basic human needs, childcare, energy-efficient and environmentally sound public transit, and gun control.

Support measures to meet the needs for affordable and accessible housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities

Support of a livable wage for all localities in New York State

STATE FINANCES

Support reforms for greater equity in education financing (K-12) for both pupils and taxpayers.

Support raising funds to provide New York's children with a sound basic education through increases in the New York State personal income tax, implemented in a progressive fashion.

INTER-LEAGUE GROUPS

IMPACT ON ISSUES Updated 2016

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Support for the replacement of the existing local residential property tax relief programs in which relief goes to all with programs based on need, with annual cost of living adjustment.

Oppose in principle the use of public funds to support non-public schools (K-12).

Oppose any increase in the maximum number of charter schools without improvements to the Charter School Act.

Support the funding of public higher education and the existing formula for financing the community system, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 state aid, and 1/3 county support.

Support a uniform equitable assessment and property tax system.

Support of measures to provide for openness and accountability in the operation of the New York State public authority system.

Support of a timely and responsive state budget.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Support of measures that hold marriage to be an economic partnership with a presumption of equality between the spouses.

Opposition to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of the children.

Support for equity in employment laws and practices and equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

Support of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence.