

**League of Women Voters**

**of**

**Delaware**

**POSITION PAPERS**

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## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE POSITION PAPERS 2013-2015

<b>INDEX</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION and PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MISSION STATEMENT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF THE LWVUS PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS 2012-2014</b>	<b>6-9</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF STATE PROGRAM 2013-2015</b>	<b>10-12</b>
<b>STATE POSITION STATEMENTS</b>	<b>13-40</b>
<b>State Government</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Delaware General Assembly</b>	<b>13-14</b>
<b>Ethics</b>	<b>13-17</b>
<b>Reapportionment/Redistricting</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Delaware State Constitution</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>Private/Public Partnerships</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Justice System/Criminal Justice</b>	<b>22-23</b>
<b>Family Court, Related State Programs for Children, Domestic Violence</b>	<b>24-25</b>
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Farmland and Critical Land Areas</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Coastal Zone</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Land Use/Transportation</b>	<b>29-30</b>
<b>Energy</b>	<b>31-32</b>
<b>Energy and Climate Change</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Before and After School Child Care</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Public Library Services</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Public School Libraries</b>	<b>36-37</b>
<b>Financing Public Education and Education Study</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Gun Control</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Health Care and Needle Exchange</b>	<b>40</b>

# INTRODUCTION

The purposes of the League of Women Voters are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected government issues. Membership is open to any U.S. citizen, male or female, who is 18 years of age or older.

The League is a nonpartisan organization and never supports or opposes any political party or any candidate. Nevertheless, in carrying out its purposes, members, as individuals, are encouraged to become involved in all phases of political activity. As an organization, the League acts on governmental issues based on LEAGUE PRINCIPLES and/or LEAGUE POSITIONS.

The PRINCIPLES are concepts of government which the League considers basic to our democratic system of government. League POSITIONS are adopted by the national, state, and local Leagues. They are the product of study, discussion and agreement by members and express the League's point of view regarding an issue.

Both PRINCIPLES and NATIONAL POSITIONS may be the basis of action on state and local issues when applicable.

## 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 meetings and making public records accessible.

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 that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that 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 development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## LWVUS-LWVEF Mission Statement and Core Values

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### **Vision, Beliefs and Intentions**

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

**The League of Women Voters of the United States** is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- ▶ **acts** after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- ▶ **builds** citizen participation in the democratic process.
- ▶ **engages** communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

**The League of Women Voters Education Fund** is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization, which:

- ▶ **builds** citizen participation in the democratic process.
- ▶ **studies** key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner.
- ▶ **enables** people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

### **We believe in:**

- ▶ respect for individuals.
- ▶ the value of diversity.
- ▶ the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.
- ▶ the power to collective decision making for the common good.

### **We will:**

- ▶ act with trust, integrity and professionalism.
- ▶ operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- ▶ take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership.
- ▶ acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

### **Core Values:**

- ▶ We are a nonpartisan political membership organization.
- ▶ We believe that grassroots initiatives and consensus building are the strengths of our organization.
- ▶ We believe that our organizational models the principles of good governance.
- ▶ We consider well before taking action and prepare well before beginning to act.
- ▶ We believe that citizenship requires knowledge, as well as the ability and will to act.
- ▶ We believe that the responsibility of good government rests on the shoulders of its citizens.
- ▶ We believe that the rights of citizens at home and abroad are interdependent.

**On the next two pages are the *Public Policy Positions* of the League of Women Voters of the United States. In addition to the statements listed the LWVUS has launched a two-year study on immigration.**

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

## PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

### 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.

**DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation.** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

#### 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.

**Urban Policy**

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

**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.**

09/21/2011 | by Gretchen Knell

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE  
A SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATE PROGRAM 2013-15**

**STATE GOVERNMENT**

- ▶ **Revenue Sources – Continuing Study:** *A Study of State Government Revenue Sources*
- ▶ **Delaware General Assembly** - Support of measures to promote a more effective and responsive legislative branch of state government, including strengthening the committee system and use of the budgetary process to review and evaluate state programs.
- ▶ **Ethics** - Support of ethics legislation in the areas of campaign finance, conflict of interest, financial disclosure and lobbying disclosure.
- ▶ **Delaware State Constitution** - Support of a Constitution for the State of Delaware which would be confined to broad principles and would promote more efficient and responsive government.
- ▶ **Public/Private Partnerships** - Support the use of public/private partnerships by governments in Delaware if a project can be better undertaken with public/private cooperation. Public input, careful controls and adequate safeguards need to be part of these partnerships.
- ▶ **Reapportionment/Redistricting** - Support for an open unbiased process for reapportionment and redistricting with opportunities for public participation.

**SOCIAL POLICY**

- ▶ **Justice System - Continuing Study:** *A re-evaluation of Delaware’s criminal justice system and the impact of the current policies and practices on society. (Action will continue to be taken under LWVDE current position.)*

*The study is worded intentionally broad so that the study committee can start where its sees the most effective effort and timeliness.*

Support for the adoption of consistent policies which, within budgetary constraints, will permit the disposition of offenders in the best interests of society, the victim(s), and the offenders and their families.

We oppose mandatory sentencing.

We support the expansion of drug courts and mental health courts for all nonviolent offenders and the appropriate science based health and mental health treatment of all offenders.

- ▶ **Family Court, Related State Programs for Children, Domestic Violence** - Support of uniformity in operation of the Family Court system; automatic expungement of certain juvenile records; state provided diagnostic services, care, education and treatment to age 21 for youths and young adults who have mental or physical illness or who are developmentally delayed or are substance abusers or abused/neglected; strong educational programs on the rights of victims of family violence.
- ▶ **Before and After School Child Care** - Support for state government involvement in encouraging, establishing and/or supporting child care programs.
- ▶ **Financing Public Education** - Support for methods of financing public education that will promote equal opportunity for quality education and improve both the local districts' and state's budgeting

while maintaining a high level of local control.

- ▶ **Education** - *A study of the public education system in Delaware with special focus on financing, charter schools, and transparency and accountability to citizens.*
- ▶ **Gun Control** - Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semiautomatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety. (LWVUS position applies)
- ▶ **Healthcare - Continuing Study:** *A study of the financing and delivery of health care in Delaware with emphasis on following the work of the Delaware Health Care Commission and related committees.* LWVDE also acts under the LWVUS health care position: "Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs."
  - ▶ Needle Exchange Programs - Support for comprehensive needle exchange programs, which also offer education and referrals to appropriate services, as part of a public health effort to reduce the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.
- ▶ **Public School Libraries** - Support policies and funding for public school library media centers that promote their central role in providing equal opportunity for all children to achieve educational excellence.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

- ▶ **Renewable Energy Portfolio** – Support for an increase in the percentage of renewable energy sources in Delaware’s Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) provided that they: have minimum environmental impact; use the best current technology as measured by reliability, proven effectiveness, and being state-of-the-art; have long range cost effectiveness including all net costs such as health and environmental costs, state and federal subsidies, and price stability. Support of measures ensuring that total electricity sales in Delaware be required to meet the RPS.
- ▶ **Transmission and Distribution** – Support for maximizing the development and delivery of renewable energy to Delaware when designing and developing new transmission plans for the region. In addition to delivering reliable, adequate electric service to Delaware, the key factors to be considered in making a decision on any transmission plan/transmission enhancements are: Degree of environmental impact; Degree of utilization of the transmission for renewable resource power vs. fossil-fuel generated power; True cost, including all cost-externalities; Safety and security of the grid.
- ▶ **Energy/Climate Change** - supports an aggressive and comprehensive energy use/climate change plan for Delaware. Some key points that should be included:  
Accelerate bringing new green businesses, jobs and industries to Delaware, and investigate emerging energy technologies. Set targets and a timetable for reducing Delaware’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Plan for extensive adaptation measures at all levels of government for climate change impacts that cannot be avoided---especially sea level rise.

Support public education and outreach; expand renewable energy and climate change in Delaware curriculum standards. As Delaware calculates energy costs, full life cycle analyses\* with all externalities\*\* must be included. Social and economic justice must be considered in implementing energy and climate change policy.

- ▶ **Coastal Zone** - Support for Coastal Zone planning which considers the best possible outcome for

people, the land, and the coastal environment.

- ▶ **Critical Land Areas** - Support for preservation and/or protection of certain critical areas (ecologically fragile estuaries and coastal areas, farmland, flood plain, aquifers, and natural areas); erosion and sedimentation controls; and coordination among all levels of government in decisions involving major facilities.
- ▶ **Farmland** - Support of a farmland preservation program.

## **LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION**

- ▶ Support of the regulation of growth and optimum use of land through comprehensive planning policy. Monitoring of land use policies and procedures and their relationship to human needs, population trends, transportation planning, and ecological and socioeconomic factors. Encouragement of continuing cooperation among governmental agencies.
- ▶ Support of a balanced, intermodal transportation system interconnected with land use and based on interagency and inter-jurisdictional coordination.
- ▶ Support reducing transportation-generated greenhouse gas emissions by wiser land use planning and by enhancing public transit options.

Some key points that should be included:

Direct development towards growth zones, except for environmentally sensitive areas within those growth zones; assure availability of infrastructure, services and walkability before developing. - Build compact, or dense, development within established development areas in which pedestrians can safely and conveniently access services; reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). - Modify Delaware's paratransit fee schedule to establish separate classifications for ADA\* and non-ADA\*\* service. - Reform the system to establish fairer pricing for non-ADA paratransit use. - Tighten eligibility requirements for all paratransit use in situations where the state has discretion. Establish a dedicated funding stream for public transit; explore a variety of funding sources.

## STATE GOVERNMENT

- ▶ **Revenue Sources – Continuing Study: *A Study of State Government Revenue Sources***  
(Adopted May, 2013 at Convention)

### DELAWARE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*The League studied the General Assembly in the early 1970's, reaching consensus on an effective legislative system in March 1972 and adding a position on the budgetary process in May 1973. Many procedural changes have been adopted by the two Chambers in the intervening years. The committee system has been greatly enhanced with most bills being considered by committees before being recommended for floor action although written analyses are sorely lacking. While, in theory, committee chairmen do not have absolute control of a bill, their influence is substantial, particularly in the Senate where rules do not require that a bill be brought before the committee within a certain number of days. (House has a 12 legislative day requirement.)*

*However, each Chamber has published rules and calendar management is handled efficiently. The professional staff has been enhanced and is augmented with interns from the University of Delaware graduate College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy.*

*Procedures adopted in reviewing both the operating and capital budgets provide a realistic opportunity for oversight, but the final budgets that are adopted by the entire General Assembly are still developed out of public view - and even most of the legislators are not privy to the deliberations. A bill that would correct some of these problems is currently before the legislature (2007).*

*Because of changes since the time of the original study, the League position has been editorially revised to more closely recognize current practice. It continues to serve as useful background in monitoring the system and forms a basis for advocacy on legislative procedural matters.*

#### **Support of measures to promote an effective and responsive legislative branch of state government.**

Specifically, the League supports:

##### A Strong Committee System

An effective committee system is a primary part of an effective legislature. Caucus discussion is not a substitute for committee activity. All bills should be studied and discussed in committee.

The committee should provide a written report which includes analysis, rationale, and minority opinion regarding relevant legislation so that the entire legislature need not duplicate work more effectively done by a standing committee. The committees should have the power to serve as screening agencies for the legislature as a whole, but chairmen should not have absolute control over bills under consideration.

Areas of standing committee responsibilities should be consolidated to facilitate member attendance and be based primarily on Cabinet Departments. Committees should parallel one another in the House and Senate. This would facilitate meeting jointly. Committee meetings should be open, scheduled in advance, and well publicized after scheduling. Meetings of both special and standing committees are needed during periods when the General Assembly is recessed.

### Publish Rules

Both Houses should continue to have published rules. Joint rules and administrative coordination would enable better flow of information between houses.

### Calendar and Bill Management

Bill synopses and statements of intent should be continued.

Use of multiple sponsorship and a consent calendar should continue.

The number of votes needed for passage of a bill should be based on the number of legislators who do not abstain from voting because of conflict of interest rather than on the total number elected to each house. (This would require a constitutional amendment.)

### Professional Staff

The professional staff should be adequate to give technical as well as clerical support to the General Assembly and its committees. It should be placed largely under Legislative Council in order to serve both chambers on a nonpartisan basis.

### June 30 Adjournment Date

There is no need at present to remove the constitutional restriction of the June 30 adjournment date. Because we have a part-time legislature with part-time salary, a preset, "guaranteed" session time enables the legislators to schedule job commitments with less conflict and inconvenience.

### Effective Budget Process

The General Assembly should continue to use the budgetary process to review and evaluate state programs. Budgeting should be based on performance and program priority.

Effective record keeping, reporting, and evaluation by the Joint Finance Committee is necessary.

## **ETHICS**

*The positions below were reached in 1974 and 1975. Many issues that have become a popular concern in the last 30 years were not even considered when the positions were developed. At that time, the League was among the few groups in the forefront of advocating for the state's first campaign finance law (and more recent revisions) and conflict of interest and financial disclosure legislation.*

*Now, while not perfect, campaign finance legislation, revised most recently in 1990, regulates the financing of all political campaigns in the state except U. S. Senator and Representative. The League position was modified in 1999 to include the national position in support of public, as well as private financing, but efforts in that direction have not been well received in the state. In 1999, we also dropped previous support for tax credits and tax deductions for campaign contributions.*

*Other ethics legislation also has improved since the 1970s. Lobbyists at the state level must register and submit quarterly spending reports; financial disclosure by state officials is required. In 1994, the then existing Ethics Commission was replaced by a Public Integrity Commission which has authority over all state officials' and employees' code of conduct legislation (but not members of the General Assembly or Judiciary both of which have their own committees), collects financial disclosure reports from all state officials (including above exemptions) and issues advisory opinions. The Commission also handles registration and reporting of lobbyists including persons who lobby the executive branch. Campaign Finance reports continue to be filed with the Election Commission whose office at present is probably best equipped to handle this work.*

### **Support of legislation in the areas of campaign finance, conflict of interest, financial disclosure, and lobbying disclosure.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware believes that democracy requires confidence in all its governmental officials. The public interest must be, and must appear to be, the primary motive behind official acts. Ethical guidelines are vital. The following recommendations and guidelines are directed toward instilling confidence in government in Delaware.

#### Financing of State Election Campaigns

A campaign finance system should allow a combination of public and private financing. *(added 1999 based on LWW US position)*

Full and timely disclosure of all except minimal campaign contributions and expenditures should be required.

The use of cash should be severely limited.

Each candidate should designate one treasurer to coordinate, control, and report all financial transactions.

The length of campaigns should be limited, consistent with full exposure of the candidates, especially the challengers. *(Note: Support for tax credits and deductions for campaign contributions was dropped by 1999 state convention).*

### Conflict of Interest and Financial Disclosure

Certain governmental officials should disclose their financial interests and abide by guidelines for lessening the possibility of conflict of interest. Those officials who should be included are:

All elected state officials and candidates for said positions.

All appointed state officials whether paid or unpaid (e.g. judges, cabinet secretaries, commission members, etc.) but excluding members of advisory groups that have no policy making powers and/or authority to expend funds.

Only those state employees that are in policy making positions and/or have authority to expend funds.

Financial disclosure should include information covering only sources of income, financial and property holdings, and debts of the official and his/her spouse and dependent children. Gifts and entertainment of significant cumulative value should also be reported (except when received from members of the family).

Restrictions that tend to eliminate conflict of interest should be mandated by law and should include prohibitions against:

Using official position to obtain financial gain for themselves, their families and businesses;

Accepting gifts of value if it could be reasonably understood to be given to influence official action;

Misusing confidential information;

Regulating a business with which the official is associated or has a substantial financial interest.

However, the law should not be too restrictive thereby discouraging government services.

Similar legislation could also apply to persons in analogous positions in political subdivisions of the state, but it is not essential to cover these persons under a state law. Local ordinances could be employed to accomplish such coverage.

## Lobbying Regulation

Communication between legislators and citizens is essential; no regulation should inhibit such communication.

Because of the fact and public impression that organized groups have a disproportionate influence on legislation, some accounting of their activities should be made available to the public by law and funds spent on direct lobbying should be reported.

Contingent fee lobbying (fee based on outcome of legislation) and gifts to public officials which would not otherwise be offered should be prohibited. (Entertainment would be excluded from this proviso, but should be disclosed.)

## Ethics Commission

An independent, bipartisan ethics commission with overlapping terms long enough to isolate its members from political pressure should collect, distribute and investigate campaign finance, financial disclosure, and lobbying disclosure statements.

Monitoring and enforcement responsibilities, including subpoena power, should be provided.

The Ethics Commission should issue advisory opinions as to conflicts of interest.

## REAPPORTIONMENT/REDISTRICTING

*The state constitution requires reapportionment and redistricting of the General Assembly after each decennial census. This has led to a practice whereby each Chamber develops its own district maps. While the practice has been a matter of contention each ten years, problems encountered in the reapportionment/redistricting for the 2002 election led the League to investigate possible alternative procedures. A bill currently before the legislature (2007) would require that a commission to be appointed for each redistricting beginning with the 2012 election. The bill would satisfy much, but not all, of the League position and has received League endorsement.*

**The League of Women Voters of Delaware believes that reapportionment and redistricting of legislative districts must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner and in accordance with federal mandates for substantial population equality adjusted after each decennial census. We believe this could best be accomplished by an independent commission type group that would have primary responsibility.**

### Commission composition

The commission should not be dominated by a single political party and should have statewide representation.

Its members could best be selected through a nominating committee created for this purpose rather than directly by members of the legislature.

Non-partisan, or at least bi-partisan membership is essential.

State office holders should not serve.

Commission members should be limited in seeking office in the immediate future.

Various criteria should be considered when redrawing district lines. In addition to substantial population equality, we believe the most important are:

Contiguous territory

Compactness

Not favoring any person or political party

Consideration of minority representation

Incumbent protection should not be a consideration.

If the increase in population is deemed sufficient, an increase in the number of legislators may be recommended when a new plan is being developed.

## DELAWARE STATE CONSTITUTION

*The Delaware Constitution was the subject of much discussion within the state generally, in the late 1960's and early 1970's. It was in the light of that discussion that the League studied and reached consensus. Subsequently, a completely revised document which incorporated much of the League's position, was drafted by a state of Delaware committee but failed to gain the necessary ratification by two successive General Assemblies. Since then, the Constitution has continued to be amended in a piecemeal fashion. (Amendments must be passed by two successive General Assemblies - i.e. election in between.)*

*In 1977 the League again reviewed the state constitution and altered the position statement to reflect certain changes that had been accomplished at that time. (e.g. cabinet form of state government). In 1990 we reviewed our earlier positions, dropping some, revising others, and the state convention in 1999 made further adjustments. The following reflects the resulting position after those changes and also incorporates our position on General Assembly voting, reached in 1972. The year the position was first adopted is indicated.*

### **Support of a constitution for the State of Delaware which would be confined to broad principles and would promote efficient and responsive government.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware believes:

A constitution should be confined to broad principles in order to be as flexible and brief as possible. (1966)

The Bill of Rights should protect the following substantive rights: religion; speech; press; petition and assembly; freedom from invasion of privacy, search and seizure except by due process; freedom from discrimination due to race, sex, national origin, religion or ancestry. (1970)

The Bill of Rights should protect the following procedural rights; prohibition against deprivation of life, liberty or property without due process; prohibition against double jeopardy, privilege against self-incrimination; equal protection of the law; right to be charged and tried promptly; public court hearings; no court costs assessed unless convicted; right to trial by jury and bail. (1970)

The constitution should provide for a strong executive branch with the governor given the power to appoint non-elected top officials. (*The original position, adopted in 1967, referred to the governor appointing all top officials including four that were, and still are, elected. In 1990 the offices of attorney general and auditor were reconsidered, resulting in no consensus for their appointment or election. In 1999 state convention also dropped treasurer and insurance commissioner. The position that the governor and lieutenant should be elected on the same ballot was dropped in 1990.*)

Details of legislative action should be removed from the constitution, but areas of responsibility

should be outlined. (1967) Qualifications for legislators should be given. Guidelines for writing, introduction and passage of legislation should be included. (1968) The number of votes needed for passage of a bill should be based on the number of legislators who do not abstain from voting because of conflict of interest rather than the total number elected to each house. (1972)

The constitution should reflect the structure of a modern judiciary system. *(The original position with respect to the judiciary system was very detailed. The 1999 state convention recognized that some portions have been accomplished and that it would be necessary to do a substantial study of the system before advocating further changes).*

The rights of local government should be protected by the constitution. Such governments should be allowed to exercise any power not denied by their own charters, state law or state constitution. (1970)

The constitution should provide for the row offices to be appointive rather than elective since they have no policy making roles. The functions of said offices should be the responsibility of the level of government which would oversee them most efficiently. The principles of a good merit system should be employed in selecting these officials in order to avoid the discontinuities that accompany reliance on patronage. (1971)

The office of Clerk of Peace should be abolished. Court-related offices (Sheriff, Prothonotary, Register in Chancery) should be placed under the state judicial system (1971)

*(Note: Prothonotary and Register in Chancery are now appointed by the Courts they serve).*

The present system of adopting amendments to the constitution by passage in two successive General Assemblies has been adequate. (1969)

## **PUBLIC PRIVATE/PARTNERSHIPS**

*The following position is the result of study conducted in 1998-1999.*

**The League of Women Voters of Delaware supports the use of public/private partnerships by governments in Delaware if a project can be better undertaken with public/private cooperation. Public input, careful controls and adequate safeguards need to be part of these partnerships.**

The League recognizes that each partnership is unique, and in order to guarantee success of a project while protecting the public sector, the project should meet the following conditions and criteria:

The initial policy decisions should be made by the appropriate legislative bodies with provisions made for community input in a timely manner.

A real commitment from both public and private sectors is needed.

The agreement should have clear-cut objectives with identifiable goals and evaluation systems and specific provisions for termination, if necessary.

Projects should be open to public scrutiny for regular and timely review.

The agreement should call for shared risks.

The public partner must have oversight and monitoring responsibility which includes financial auditing.

The agreement should include provisions for good communication between partners and all parties concerned.

Any on-going committee or board which oversees a project should include representatives of the local community.

## JUSTICE SYSTEM

*The League of Women Voters began study of the criminal justice system in 1977, concentrating on the judicial and correctional systems, their respective structures and organization, their operations and interrelationships. Consensus was reached in March 1979. Changes since then have included establishment of a state Sentencing Accountability Commission. A five level continuum of sentencing alternatives has been developed and accepted, a separate “drug court” has been set up to handle first time or “minor” drug offenders, a Boot Camp program gives special rehabilitation training to selected prisoners, and a prison expansion program is underway. Nevertheless, prisons continue to be overcrowded, at least in part because of the proliferation of mandatory sentences.*

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Support for the adoption of consistent policies which, within budgetary constraints, will permit the disposition of offenders in the best interests of society, the victims, and the offenders and their families.**

▶ **We oppose mandatory sentencing.**

▶ **We support the expansion of drug courts and mental health courts for all nonviolent offenders and the appropriate science based health, mental health and addiction evaluation and treatment of all offenders** (*adopted by Convention 5/2005*)

▶ **Support of uniformity in the operation of the Family Court system; automatic expungement of certain juvenile records; state provided diagnostic services, care, education and treatment to age 21 for youths and young adults who have mental or physical illness or who are developmentally delayed or are substance abusers or abused/neglected; strong educational programs on the rights of victims of family violence.** (*Amended by Convention 5/2005: more detail under the Family Court position.*)

### Courts:

While recognizing the need for budget limitations, the League supports:

Provision of all necessary tools to facilitate sound decision-making by the judiciary;

Employment of independent professional evaluators to assess the costs, benefits and long-range effects of current sentencing practices;

Use of such evaluation results as guidelines for executive and legislative branches of state government in developing legislation and by the judiciary in exercising sentencing responsibilities.

Use in the courts of a range of sentencing alternatives where such alternatives do not create a danger to society or jeopardize rehabilitation of the offender. Alternatives should include but not be limited to restitution, work service, work referral, and other programs of a constructive nature.

Judicial discretion in making sentencing decisions rather than mandatory sentences imposed in

statute. *(Adopted by Convention, 2003)*

Expansion of drug courts and mental health courts for all non violent offenders and appropriate science based health, mental health and addiction treatment for all offenders. *(Adopted by Convention, 2005)*

Corrections:

While recognizing the need for budget limitations, the League supports:

Continuation by the Department of Corrections of programs and policies to improve screening and classification for both detainees and convicted offenders;

Opportunities for offenders to acquire training and skills and to receive mental health treatment and treatment for addictions so that they may function as responsible citizens and be integrated into the law-abiding community. *(Psychological treatment and treatment for substance abuse added by Convention, 1999).*

- ▶ **Justice System - Continuing Study: *A re-evaluation of Delaware's criminal justice system and the impact of the current policies and practices on society.*** *(Action will continue to be taken under LWVDE current position.)*

*The study is worded intentionally broad so that the study committee can start where its sees the most effective effort and timeliness.*

(Adopted May 2013 at Convention)

## **FAMILY COURT, RELATED STATE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

*The Family Court system was studied in the early 1980's as an extension of the Criminal Justice Study. The position was adopted in January 1985. At that time, League observers found a disparity in the way Family Courts functioned between New Castle, Kent and Sussex Counties and that there was inconsistent use of the arbitration process in handling misdemeanor cases. In addition, while it was not a court function, it came to our attention that resources available for the treatment and rehabilitation of youthful offenders as well as neglected, abused and troubled children were sadly lacking, and that insufficient attention was paid to all forms of domestic violence. Since 1985, facilities and programs for youth have received more attention but many of the deficiencies continue.*

*Also, a Domestic Violence Task Force spearheaded action in that area of concern. A Domestic Violence Coordinating Council was established by the General Assembly. It works with state courts and law enforcement agencies in developing legislation and programs relating to domestic violence abuse and child custody and support.*

**Support of uniformity in the operation of the Family Court system; automatic expungement of certain juvenile records; state provided diagnostic services, care, education and treatment to age 21 for youths and young adults who have mental or physical illness or who are developmentally delayed or are substance abusers or abused/neglected; strong educational programs on the rights of victims of family violence. (Amended 5/2005 Convention)**

There should be:

Adequate staffing with Deputy Attorneys General and Public Defenders;

Development and implementation of more specific guidelines for screening cases for arbitration and for the arbitration process;

Adequate training for court staff, judges and police in handling domestic violence cases.

The court records of juveniles who have been involved in only one arbitration case and have no further criminal charges should be automatically expunged at age 18 when all conditions of arbitration have been fulfilled. Until such time as this can become the practice, we believe all juveniles and their parents/guardians should be notified automatically, at the time of arbitration, that they are to apply for expungement at age 18 and that such notification be part of the contract.

The state should provide diagnostic services, care, education and treatment to age 21, for youths and young adults who have mental or physical illness or who are developmentally delayed or are substance abusers, or are abused/neglected. Both inpatient and outpatient care should be provided. Facilities should be within a reasonable distance to enable families of patients to be

included in treatment. Cost to the patient and family for such care should be based on ability to pay and in accordance with the state policies in similar situations. In addition, the state has the responsibility to provide care for abused/neglected youths. Such care might include group homes and a system for the recruitment, training and retention of foster parents.

There should be a strong education program statewide on women's and children's rights to raise the level of awareness and to convince the public, police, judges and court staff that domestic violence is a serious matter. We believe that all victims of family violence, including children, are entitled to equal protection under the law.

## LAND USE

*In the late 1970's the League of Women Voters of Delaware reached positions in support of preservation/protection of farmland and other critical land areas. Development pressures in recent years caused the League to re-study land use issues. A new, more inclusive position on land use planning was adopted by Convention, 2001.*

**Land use planning - Support of the regulation of growth and optimum use of land through comprehensive planning policy. Monitoring of land use policies and procedures and their relationship to human needs, population trends, transportation planning, and ecological and socioeconomic factors. Encouragement of continuing cooperation among governmental agencies.**

Support for:

A comprehensive planning policy which includes:

- Necessary implementing ordinances and their enforcement.
- Impact fees on new development.
- Transit as an important factor in controlling development.
- The realized interconnectedness between land use and transportation planning.
- Provision for heterogeneous communities which include different types of housing, commerce, light industry and/or community facilities.

Strict control of development in flood plain areas

Preservation of farmland, open space, and natural areas, especially in stream areas.

Coordination among agencies and various levels of government involved in land use.

Provisions for informed and active participation of citizens in governmental planning process.

Favorable tax treatment for farm and non-farm open land as part of a comprehensive policy for preserving open land.

- A roll-back in taxes and/or other tax measures to recover lost public revenue should be considered when open land is rezoned, subdivided or sold for development.

## **Farmland**

*In the late 1970's, the League of Women Voters of Delaware studied certain land use issues from a purely state perspective. In April 1977, a position was adopted in support of a farmland preservation program as a part of a state land use policy which balances human needs and environmental quality.*

### **Support of a farmland preservation program.**

A farmland preservation program should:

- Protect farms intact with all related land, whether or not said land had actually been cultivated.
- Have voluntary entry, if possible, with benefits and restrictions recognized by owner;
- Include time limits and significant tax penalties for withdrawal and development of land;
- Include size, productivity and location as eligibility factors;
- Be aimed at preserving land which is a natural resource;
- Include procedures for reevaluation and flexibility to meet future needs;
- Include fair compensation if entry is mandatory.

## **Critical Land Areas**

*As a part of the state study (above), and again with consideration for human needs and environmental quality, the following position was adopted in January 1978.*

### **Support for the preservation and/or protection of certain critical areas and coordination among all levels of government.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware specifically believes that recognition should be given to the importance of:

- Floodplain and erosion and sedimentation control;
- Protection for aquifer recharge areas;
- Natural areas preservation;
- Increased coordination in siting major facilities.

## **Coastal Zone**

*Based on national positions, the League of Women Voters of Delaware supported the Delaware Coastal Zone Act in 1971. In the late 1970's, with interest in a deep water bulk transfer facility (Superport) running high in the state, the League studied planning for the Coastal Zone. The position was adopted in April 1980 and modified by the 1999 state convention to more closely reflect current conditions.*

**Support for Coastal Zone planning which considers the best possible outcome for people, the land and the coastal environment.**

Specifically, the League supports:

- Protection of ecologically fragile estuaries and coastal areas;
- The prohibition against heavy industry in the Coastal Zone Act and belief that the term "heavy industry" should be more clearly defined;
- Clearly defining the boundaries of the Port of Wilmington.
- Requirement that industries situated in the Coastal Zone repair environmental damage for which they are responsible. Such damage should be impartially evaluated.

The League opposes:

- Construction of an oil or gas pipeline which terminates in the Coastal Zone;
- Construction of a superport.

## LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

*The study upon which this consensus is based grew out of the 2010 recommendations of the Governor's Energy Advisory Council. Each of the five elements of this position is geared toward reducing Delaware's carbon imprint, and represents some aspect of the recommendations of the Council's workgroup on Transportation. Although a great deal of attention is paid to energy-efficient technological advances in transportation, such as more efficient vehicles and lower carbon dioxide levels in fuels, without keen attention to land use planning the technology will not sufficiently reduce transportation-generated greenhouse gases to get Delaware on track to participate in global efforts to affect climate change. Land use planning that considers distances which citizens must travel will go far toward reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Furthermore, the need for attention to a state public transit system that has historically been funded at about half the national average since its inception, is crucial if we are to take our place among states leading in the reduction of carbon dioxide. The following position was arrived at by consensus of the members and approved by the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Delaware in April, 2011.*

**The League of Women Voters of Delaware supports reducing transportation-generated greenhouse gas emissions by wiser land use planning and by enhancing public transit options. Some key points that should be included:**

1. Direct development towards growth zones, except for environmentally sensitive areas within those growth zones; assure availability of infrastructure, services and walkability before developing.
2. Build compact, or dense, development within established development areas in which pedestrians can safely and conveniently access services.
3. Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
4. Modify Delaware's paratransit fee schedule to establish separate classifications for ADA\* and non-ADA\*\* service. Reform the system to establish fairer pricing for non-ADA paratransit use. Tighten eligibility requirements for all paratransit use in situations where the state has discretion.
5. Establish a dedicated funding stream for public transit; explore a variety of funding sources.

\*ADA refers to the Americans for Disabilities Act requirement that paratransit service be provided within a 3/4 mile radius of all fixed-route bus service routes. Both origins and destinations must be within the required radius.

\*\*Non-ADA refers to paratransit trips which either originate or end outside the 3/4 mile radius.

## TRANSPORTATION

*Although the League of Women Voters of Delaware can act on various transportation issues based on national environmental and social policy positions a state transportation position was adopted by Convention, 2001. This position was merged with a previous state position directed mainly to transportation related state Authorities and agencies. The wording of the merged positions was approved by the LWVDE State Board in November, 2001.*

### **Support a balanced, intermodal transportation system interconnected with land use and based on interagency and inter-jurisdictional coordination.**

The League supports:

A multi-modal/interconnected transportation system, including but not limited to: highways, transit, rail, bicycle paths and pedestrian walkways.

A transportation system that is consistent with protection of natural resources, including water quality and supply, and air quality.

A transportation system consistent with conservation of energy resources.

Full coordination between transportation-related authorities and agencies and regional, state and local planning agencies with an emphasis on the interconnection between land use and transportation.

Some measure of public control exerted on transportation-related agencies and authorities in the State of Delaware, regardless of whether they are publicly or privately-financed. Minimum controls should include:

- \* A requirement to comply with local, state and regional comprehensive transportation plans and adopted land use plans.
- \* Public hearings on projects held early in the planning stage.
- \* Requirements for public hearings and Environmental Impact Statements on all projects when required.
- \* Statistical data, reports and studies done by, for and about transportation-related authorities and agencies available to the public as well as the government.

Public education about transportation issues and policy based on workshops, forums, etc.

Timely participation by the public in decision-making.

## **ENERGY**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware adopted an energy study at its convention on 5/2/2007. It chose to study an energy plan for Delaware minimizing global warming and climate change. The study revealed that the LWVD positions on energy were generally covered by LWVUS energy positions and only two new areas were not covered. Those two areas were Renewable Energy Portfolio and Transmission and Distribution. Positions for these two new areas were reached by consensus and adopted at the LWVD Board meeting on July 22, 2010.

### **Background Material on Renewable Energy Portfolio:**

*Renewable energy portfolio standard (RPS) policies are legal mandates that require utilities to own or acquire renewable energy or renewable energy certificates to account for a certain percentage of their retail electricity sales, or a certain amount of generating capacity, within a specified timeframe. RPS policies are widely considered to be among the most important of those which lead to increased renewable energy capacity. Thus RPS policies fall within the League of Women Voters of U.S.'s position on Energy: The League supports reduction of energy growth rates through conservation and energy efficient technologies, predominant reliance on renewable resources, and energy goals and policies acknowledging the U.S. as a responsible member of the world community. RPS policies are determined by individual states. There is no Federal policy. Delaware has an RPS policy which is modified from time to time with respect to its specific requirements, but which does not cover all electricity sales in the state. Thus LWV of Delaware has developed the following positions with respect to the RPS policy of Delaware.*

### **Renewable Energy Portfolio**

#### **The League of Women Voters of Delaware:**

#### **1. Supports an increase in the percentage of renewable energy sources in Delaware's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) provided that they:**

- **have minimum environmental impact;**
- **use the best current technology as measured by reliability, proven effectiveness, and being state-of-the-art;**
- **have long range cost effectiveness including all net costs such as health and environmental costs, state and federal subsidies, and price stability.**

#### **2. Supports measures ensuring that total electricity sales in Delaware be required to meet the RPS.**

## **Background Material on Transmission and Distribution:**

*The transmission system (the grid) that supplies wholesale electricity to Delaware's three distribution facilities: Delmarva Power, Delaware Municipal Electric Corp. (DEMEC), and Delaware Electric Cooperative (DEC) is old and inadequate and was designed to bring electricity from Midwest fossil-fuel-fired power plants to Delaware, a net importer of electricity. In recent years, transmission enhancement planning--the Mid-Atlantic Power Pathway (MAPP)--was without innovation; and the approved plans were put on hold.*

*A study released in 2010 by the National Renewable Energy Lab shows that connected East Coast off-shore wind generation can provide 20% - 30% of the U.S. energy needs if appropriate system modifications and structural changes are made to the grid. If Delaware is to fully develop its renewable resources, primarily offshore wind and solar/photovoltaics, a new approach to transmission planning and grid enhancement will be necessary.*

## **Transmission and Distribution**

**The League of Women Voters of Delaware supports:**

- 1. Maximizing the development and delivery of renewable energy to Delaware when designing and developing new transmission plans for the region.**
- 2. In addition to delivering reliable, adequate electric service to Delaware, the key factors to be considered in making a decision on any transmission plan/transmission enhancements are:**
  - **Degree of environmental impact;**
  - **Degree of utilization of the transmission for renewable resource power vs. fossil-fuel generated power;**
  - **True cost, including all cost-externalities;**
  - **Safety and security of the grid;**

## **ENERGY/CLIMATE CHANGE**

*The League of Women Voters of Delaware is aligned with its national organization in its belief that climate change represents a serious threat to the environment, the economies and security of all nations, and the health and welfare of people around the world. The correlation between global temperature increases and rising concentrations of carbon dioxide indicates the need to sharply reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.*

*The Energy/Climate Change Position resulted from a continuation of the Energy Study; i.e., to study an energy plan for Delaware minimizing climate change. A position was arrived at by consensus of members and approved by the Board in March 2011.*

**The League of Women Voters of Delaware supports an aggressive and comprehensive energy use/climate change plan for Delaware. Some key points that should be included:**

**Accelerate bringing new green businesses, jobs and industries to Delaware, and investigate emerging energy technologies.**

**Set targets and a timetable for reducing Delaware's total greenhouse gas emissions.**

**Plan for extensive adaptation measures at all levels of government for climate change impacts that cannot be avoided---especially sea level rise.**

**Support public education and outreach; expand renewable energy and climate change in Delaware curriculum standards.**

**As Delaware calculates energy costs, full life cycle analyses\* with all externalities\*\* must be included.**

**Social and economic justice must be considered in implementing energy and climate change policy.**

\*Life cycle analysis is a technique to assess environmental impacts associated with all the stages of a product's life from cradle-to-grave (i.e., from raw material extraction through materials processing, manufacture, distribution, use repair and maintenance, and disposal or recycling).

\*\*Energy externalities are external costs and benefits--health, environmental, security, and infrastructure--associated with the production, distribution, and consumption of energy that are not, or may not be fully incorporated into the market price.

## **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CHILD CARE**

*The League of Women Voters of Delaware looked into the need and availability of before and after school child care in 1986 and 1987 and adopted a position in support of state involvement in such programs in August 1987. Since then, with the aid of federal and some state grants, as well as fees when possible, nonprofit agencies have established programs using elementary school buildings, community centers, etc. However, the availability of such programs varies from school district to school district, and the methods of addressing the need are still being developed.*

### **Support for state government involvement in encouraging, establishing, and/or supporting before and after school child care programs.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware believes that there is a need for before and after school child care programs. We support state government involvement in encouraging and/or establishing such programs with state funds, those funds to be used for pilot programs, start-up costs and/or ongoing support.

The League supports programs which would have sliding scale fees; have before and after-school hours; and include kindergarten-age children.

Before and after school child care programs need not be limited to public school buildings. We support the use of public school buses to provide transportation to other school and non-school sites. Cost of such transportation should be supported by user fees if possible and the other sites should be near the child's regular bus route.

## **PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES**

*In 1989 the League of Women Voters of Delaware extended ongoing local Leagues' concerns about libraries by adopting a statewide study of library services and by following the work of the Delaware Commission on Libraries. The following position was adopted in March 1991.*

### **LIBRARY SERVICES**

**Support of free and accessible public library services available to every Delawarean through centralized library systems (state or county), adequately funded and efficiently managed.**

The League supports the following policies:

Contract/independent libraries should be encouraged to become full county libraries.

Statewide criteria should be established for delineating the geographic area served by each library.

Each public library should have a basic up-to-date reference collection.

Each public library should have access to comprehensive information services.

Certain libraries should be designated the responsibility for building up subject collections as resources for all.

Delaware Division of Libraries should maintain a union catalog of holdings of public libraries and other significant collections in the state.

State and county governments should be responsible for funding library services.

The state funding formula should be reviewed periodically.

Functions and duties of the Division of Libraries as specified in the Delaware Code, should be adequately funded.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARIES**

*The state school library position was adopted by concurrence at Convention 1997. It was based on a study of public school libraries conducted by the League of Women Voters of New Castle County. The results of this study were presented to local Leagues throughout the state.*

**Support policies and funding for public school library media centers that promote their central role in providing equal opportunity for all children to achieve educational excellence.**

Funding to provide library resources should be equally available to all students and staff in public schools in Delaware.

Each public school library media center should be staffed by at least one certified library media specialist, with clerical assistance.

Training in the use of new technology should be provided for all public school librarians and staff.

Public school library media centers should have, or have access to, both print and non-print materials, e.g., books, magazines, data bases, Internet, a variety of media and electronic resources. Resources should be up-to-date, especially in areas where currency is essential, e.g., reference, science, etc.

A specific percentage of state education funds should be dedicated to public school library media centers each year, preferably through a line item in the state budget.

Public school library media center collections should support each school's curricula.

Public school library media centers should be evaluated periodically.

There should be an ongoing maintenance program for all technology hardware for public school library media centers. Maintenance should not be part of the school library media specialist's duties.

Policies and practices of public school library media centers should adhere to the concept of intellectual freedom and the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*.

### *LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS*

*The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services:*

- 1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be*

*excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.*

2. *Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan and doctrinal disapproval.*
3. *Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.*
4. *Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.*
5. *A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.*
6. *Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.*

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION**

- ▶ **Education - *A study of the public education system in Delaware with special focus on financing, charter schools, and transparency and accountability to citizens.***

(Adopted May 2013 at Convention)

## **FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION**

*The League of Women Voters of Delaware studied the financing of public schools and reached consensus in September 1980.*

**Support for methods of financing public education that will promote equal opportunity for quality education and improve both the local district's and state's budgeting while maintaining a high level of local control.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware supports:

Funding for special needs such as remediation, special education, gifted and vocational programs;

A high level of local control to encourage flexibility and community involvement;

A continuation of the concept of unit funding under which the state provides funds for an adequate education for each student;

Uniform property assessment procedures and formulas throughout the state;

Retention of optional local supplements because of their importance in promoting responsiveness of local boards to community needs;

A state program to assure that local districts have similar ability to generate supplemental funds for education (for example, a fully funded equalization system such as Division III );

Improved budgeting procedures for both the local districts and the state by a system that assures local districts a specific number of dollars in time for the next year's budget and accommodates decreasing and increasing enrollments.

Efforts to equalize tax burdens are desirable, but are secondary to the League's primary goals of maintaining and improving educational quality in Delaware.

Note: Although the League recognizes that, in theory, pupil achievement could be a factor in financing public education (either to fund more heavily where achievement is low or to reward with extra funds where achievement is high), at this time we see no practical means of implementation.

## **GUN CONTROL**

*The League of Women Voters of Delaware reached consensus on the control of handguns in December 1981. The 1989 state convention voted to extend that position to include assault weapons. At the time of the 1981 consensus, we recognized the need for controls at the federal level although there was no national position from which to act. In 1990 the League of Women Voters of the United States adopted a similar gun control position which is now the basis for all gun control action.*

**Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semiautomatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer protection. (LWVUS position applies)**

## HEALTH CARE

- ▶ **Healthcare - Continuing Study: *A study of the financing and delivery of health care in Delaware with emphasis on following the work of the Delaware Health Care Commission and related committees.***

LWVDE also acts under the LWVUS health care position: "Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs."

(Adopted May 2013 at Convention)

## NEEDLE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

*(Adopted by the state board at the April 7, 2006 board meeting after concurrence by LWVSC and LWVGD with LWWNCC study and position)*

**Support for comprehensive needle exchange programs, which also offer education and referrals to appropriate services, as part of a public health effort to reduce the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C.**

The League of Women Voters of Delaware believes that the possible transmission of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases such as Hepatitis C via the sharing of contaminated needles puts uninfected addicts and their sexual partners at risk and is a public health problem which should be addressed by the State. We believe the strategy of exchanging clean needles for used needles as part of a structured program which includes education and referral services will result in more positive interactions with the addicted population. We also believe that while needle exchange programs may not change or reduce addiction rates, needle exchange programs will accomplish the primary goal of preventing further spread of blood-borne diseases.

We support programs which follow the National HIV Consortium/CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) guidelines:

“Well planned needle exchange programs provide the following services:

- Participants are issued an identification card and registered with the program.
- One clean needle/syringe is provided for one dirty needle/syringe
- Dirty needles are collected in proper container for safe disposal
- Service providers are accessible on a regular basis at specific locations
- Information is kept confidential and used only for public health research/education
- Security of the exchange sites and equipment is required
- Referrals are made to appropriate treatment and health & social service providers
- Appropriate levels of staff have expertise in working with injecting drug users
- Education about contracting HIV and other diseases through injection drug use/sexual contact is provided.”

We also support programs to decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases specifically targeted to youth and young adults.