



The League of
Women Voters
of Illinois

Where We Stand 2017-2019 Program

Abridged Edition with actions from 2009-2017

The League of Women Voters of Illinois
332 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 634
Chicago, IL 60604

Phone: 312-939-5935

issues@lwvil.org

www.lwvil.org

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FOREWORD

Where We Stand 2017-2019 is the platform of the League of Women Voters of Illinois. It is a companion to *Impact on Issues*, the League of Women Voters of the United States' program book. Taken together, these publications and the *League Principles* form the basis for all action taken by Illinois Leagues on state and national issues.

PROGRAM: *Where We Stand*, covering the LWVIL state positions and the action foci adopted at the 2017 Convention, is designed to help local Leagues use the state program effectively. The material is organized into four topic sections: Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy, corresponding to the order they appear in *Impact on Issues*. Each section begins with a summary of relevant LWVUS positions and major action taken by Illinois Leagues under those positions. The Illinois LWV positions are then listed in full, followed by a brief historical background and recent action taken, with references to the interrelationship between positions. A summary, *Positions in Brief*, is included; local Leagues are encouraged to share this section with their members.

PROCEDURES FOR TAKING ACTION: Local Leagues are encouraged to apply national and state positions to local and/or regional issues. Before taking action on national issues, local Leagues must consult with the LWVIL Issues and Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs at issues@lwwil.org and the national League. Before taking action on statewide issues, local Leagues must consult with the LWVIL Issues and Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs. On regional issues, local Leagues must consult with all affected Leagues. See "Action Guidelines for Local Leagues" for consultation information.

PURPOSE: The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots, multi-issue organization. Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policies of the League, male or female, may become a member of the League. The League's purposes are:

- To establish positions on public policy through member participation and agreement.
- To take concerted actions that secure policies consistent with League positions.
- To enhance citizen participation in federal, state and local government decisions.
- To increase citizen participation in the election process.

LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters Believes:

- In representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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, 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.
- 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.

Action Under Principles: The *Principles* are "concepts of government" to which the League subscribes. According to the LWVUS Bylaws, they serve as authorization for adoption of national, state and local positions and as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. However, because the *Principles* are broad in scope, action based on *Principles* alone should be undertaken with caution. It is suggested that any action on the *Principles* be taken in conjunction with present League positions to which they apply and on which member agreement and understanding are known to exist.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois is committed to the principle that amendments to the federal Constitution should require only a simple majority rather than a 3/5 majority for ratification in Illinois. The federal ratification process requires approval by 2/3 of both houses of Congress and approval by 3/4 of the state legislatures for an amendment to be ratified. We agree that these stringent requirements provide sufficient protection for our Constitution. This interpretation would apply only to the federal Constitution.

LWVIL President: Bonnie Cox

Denk, Mary Klonosky, Jane Ballengee, Judi Szilak, Sharon Alter

Edited by LWVIL Issues Specialists Contributors:
Mary-Lou Aagaard, Janet Craft, Krista Grimm,
Jan Kay, Janet Kittlaus, Laura Kratz, Sheri
Latash, Paula Lawson, Barbara Marsh, Claire
McIntyre, Kathryn Nesburg, Di Niesman,
Margaret O'Hara, Jean Pierce, Kim Reed, Hilary

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Illinois, 332 S. Michigan Avenue, Suite #634, Chicago,
IL 60604

phone: 312/939-5935 fax: 312/939-6887 e-mail:
info@lwvil.org website: www.lwvil.org

LWVIL Action Foci for 2017-19

Adopted by delegates at the June 2017 Convention

- Election Laws, including Voting Rights, Redistricting and Campaign Finance
- Environmental Issues
- Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)
- Fiscal Policies, with a particular focus on a responsible State budget,

including Education and Human Services

- Gun Violence Prevention
- Healthcare and Reproductive Choices
- Immigration

LWVIL Position Update

At the 2017 convention, a committee was formed to update the Criminal Justice Position.

LWVUS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Positions and Major Action by the Illinois League
Complete LWVUS Positions in Impact on Issues.

LWVUS Position:

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

LWVIL Action

2003-2005: Democracy Project

LWVIL approved a recommendation from the Issues and Action Committee to assess how well Illinois citizens were truly represented by their elected officials after the Illinois House allowed over 250 shell bills to advance to third reading with little description of substance during the Spring Session. 26 of those shell bills were then used as vehicles for substantial legislation - including budget legislation - that denied citizens and many legislators time for input. Consistent with the core mission of *Making Democracy Work*, the

Democracy Project was designed to strengthen citizen participation and restore public confidence in our state government.

In 2004, League members monitored bills, including shell bills, in the General Assembly. Local Leagues' in-district legislative interviews solicited a broad range of feedback on shell bills. From these interviews, ways to empower rank and file members throughout the legislative process began to emerge.

The second phase of the project included research done by LWVIL staff who interviewed political science and policy experts for their views on the process and whether they saw opportunities for meaningful public input. LWVIL used this information to formulate a survey on the legislative process for 2005 legislative interviews. The Democracy Project

Committee also interviewed the legislative leaders. In both sets of interviews, opinions were divided as to how well the system was running.

In spring 2005, local League members conducted their annual legislative interviews using the legislative process questionnaire. At LWVIL Lobby Day in April, members met with available local legislators and acted as an "Observer Corps". Responses from legislative interviews and Lobby Day were collected and summarized.

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote

1976, Revised 1982

LWVUS Position:

The LWVUS believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

Recent LWVIL Action:

Illinois Leagues worked to increase polling place accessibility for the disabled, to expand voter registration opportunities in the state, and to pass the 1993 National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter).

2001: Local Leagues participated in the LWVUS survey of election officials during the summer and findings were published in November. At the same time, LWVIL conducted its own survey of Illinois election authorities. (See LWVIL State Election Laws section.)

2002: With LWVIL support Congress passed the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) This major piece of legislation calls for numerous election reforms that affect many parts of the electoral process including a requirement that each state form a planning committee to help guide its implementation

within the state. The LWVIL president served on Illinois' planning committee for voter education and outreach.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation

Revised 1982 and 2000

LWVUS Position:

Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

LWVIL Action: The LWVIL supported the agenda of the national League at the LWVUS 2000 Convention. Local Leagues support this effort by responding to LWVUS action alerts.

Election Process

Apportionment

1966, Revised 1982

LWVUS Position:

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

LWVIL Action: The Illinois League has supported apportionment based on population and a state apportionment process open to the public. (See LWVIL State Redistricting.)

Campaign Finance

1974, Revised 1982

LWVUS Position:

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.

Note: This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office, primaries as well as general elections and may be applied to state and local campaigns.

Background: Regulation in Illinois

In 1974, the Illinois General Assembly - in the post-Watergate era reform movement - passed a law to require the reporting of campaign receipts and expenditures (10-ILCS5/0-1). While many other states and the federal government placed limits on contributions and expenditures, prohibited corporate entities from contributing or spending on politics, and adopted public financing systems, Illinois chose to adopt a law that relied exclusively on two interrelated mechanisms to accomplish its purpose: disclosure and reporting. Candidates for public office and political party organizations were required to disclose the sources of contributions and how they spent those contributions.

LWVIL became active in the area of Campaign Finance Reform in the mid-1990's. In 1995, LWVIL joined the Task Force on Campaign Finance Reform in Illinois, a project of Illinois Issues and the Institute for Public Affairs, to research and promote public discussion of the role of money in politics. Following the final project report, *Tainted Democracy: How Money Distorts the Election Process in Illinois and What Must Be Done to Reform the Campaign Finance System* in January 1997, the Joyce Foundation gave a grant to the Education Fund to build a statewide organization. The Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR), to promote public understanding, support, and advocacy for reforming the Illinois campaign finance system was formed and spun off as an entity separate from League. LWVIL has continuously worked with ICPR and other partners to promote campaign finance and ethics legislation.

Recent LWVIL Action:

The League has supported public financing of campaigns and campaign finance and government ethics reforms in Illinois. Measures supported by the League include contribution limits, a statewide voters guide for constitutional officers, barring government officials from soliciting campaign contributions from people or businesses they regulate, setting a limit on lobbyist gifts to elected officials, prohibiting political activity by state employees on state time, creating an ethics commission, strengthening state laws regulating lobbying of state government and providing for voluntary public funding of Appellate and Supreme court election campaigns.

2009 Illinois Reform Commission - CHANGE Illinois

In response to corruption charges against and subsequent impeachment of the sitting governor in early 2009, the Illinois Lieutenant Governor created the Illinois Reform Commission and the General Assembly convened the Joint Committee on Government Reform. CHANGE Illinois, a new coalition of civic, business, labor, professional, non-profit and philanthropic organizations was formed. LWVIL - along with CHANGE Illinois - called for an end to Illinois' unregulated campaign finance system and for creation of a system of campaign contribution limits, like those in use at the federal level.

2009: LWVIL presented testimony to the Joint Committee on Government Reform in March and our members contacted their legislators. The General Assembly passed HB7 which fell short of real reform. With pressure from LWVIL members, the press and the public, the governor vetoed the bill.

CHANGE Illinois and LWVIL urged the governor and legislative leaders to work together to craft stronger reform legislation to be passed during the October Veto Session.

An efficient and effective law to control contributions needs the following:

- Reasonable limits applied to all individual and PAC contributions to candidates and parties;
- Limits on fund transfers among political committees, as well as coordinated expenditures on behalf of a candidate;
- Limits on contributions to candidates applied by each election cycle, not each calendar year;
- More complete and frequent disclosure of campaign contributions and expenditures;
- A strengthened oversight agency with sufficient authority and resources to enforce the law, conduct random audits, and investigate and impose penalties for violations.

Campaign Finance and Ethics Reform

Both the 2009 and 2011 LWVIL Conventions, continuing work that has taken place since the late 1990's, readopted a Campaign Finance Reform Action Focus

In the fall of 2009, major campaign finance reform legislation (PA 96-0832) became law. It took effect on January 1, 2011 and changed the way in which Illinois regulates the use of money to influence political campaigns. This legislation was Illinois' first successful attempt to impose contribution limits on the amount of money that individuals, corporations, unions, associations, and PACs can give to candidates and political parties in primary and general elections. Additionally, the new law imposed some limits on the movement of money between political committees in primary elections. *However, PA 96-0832 did not provide for limits on*

contributions from political party and legislative caucus committees to candidate political committees in general elections.

PA 96-0832 established a framework for more frequent disclosure of contributions and expenditures; provided for random audits by the State Board of Elections to ensure compliance with the laws; and enhanced penalties for violations of the law's provisions.

2011-2013: PA 96-0832 also created the Illinois Campaign Finance Reform Task Force (IL CFRTF) charged with considering a system of public financing by State government for the conduct and finance of election campaigns, and conducting a thorough review of the implementation of campaign finance reform legislation in Illinois and producing reports periodically. The LWVIL has presented testimony to the IL CFRTF on three occasions. On 12/15/2011 the LWVIL urged the Task Force to recommend that the General Assembly consider a system of public financing. The LWVIL presented a statement at the 1/17/2013 hearing calling for greater transparency in elections, and for closing loopholes in Illinois' Election Code by requiring greater disclosure of independent expenditures. At the 4/22/13 hearing the LWVIL urged the IL CFRTF to recommend that the General Assembly maintain campaign contribution limits. The IL CFRTF was to submit its final report on 3/10/15. That report has not been issued.

LWVIL opposed legislation in 2012 and 2013 that removes contribution limits in some races eroding the effectiveness of the 2009 legislation. PA 97-0766 (2012) removes

limits on all contributions to all candidates running in an election where spending by *an* independent expenditure committee (or super PAC) reaches a threshold amount of \$250,000 in support of a candidate in a statewide race or \$100,000 for all other elective offices. PA 98-0115 (2013) the Election Code Omnibus Bill removes contribution limits in races where *multiple* Super PACs combine to spend above \$250,000 in a statewide race or \$100,000 in any other race. Consequently, contributions limits will be lifted for more legislative and statewide races.

2014: League members were asked to contact the IRS about proposed regulations for 501(c)(4) organizations that would significantly change what kind of political activity and how much of that activity a 501(c)(4) organization could carry out. The regulations would rein in the secret “dark money” in elections but would undermine the League’s ability to conduct truly nonpartisan voter service activities.

The League opposed (PA98-1129) legislation that reduced government transparency by limiting the ability of citizens to seek public records under the Freedom of Information Act. It is more difficult for citizens to obtain a large volume of records.

2015: The League opposed legislation that would exempt municipalities from disclosing key financial information about contract and events held at publicly-owned venues, preventing the public from knowing what some municipalities are doing with tax dollars and the facilities owned and operated with taxpayer money.

The League supported (PA) 99-0437 legislation that closed a reporting gap and increased the frequency of reporting requirements for independent expenditures related to campaigns.

2017: The League supported SB1424, the Small Donor Democracy Matching System for Fair Elections Act, which would create a small donor campaign contribution matching system for candidates for IL State Constitutional Offices and the State Legislature.

SB2089, legislation that closes a loophole in the Election Code by requiring tax-exempt 501(c)(4),501(c)(5) and 501(c)(6) organizations, defined as political action committees, ballot initiative committees and independent expenditure committees by the Internal Revenue Code, who make contributions to candidates to report their donors was supported by LWVIL.

LWVUS: Following a national study adopted an updated position on Money in Politics in April 2016, making League better able to respond to current campaign finance issues.

The League will continue to work to strengthen Campaign Finance Reform Legislation and work toward public funding of campaigns by supporting systems like small donor campaign contribution matching systems.

Selection of the President 1970, revised 1982, Updated 2004, Revised 2010

LWVUS Position:

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.

Background and LWVIL Action:

LWVIL members participated in the position review adopted at the 2002 LWVUS Convention.

National Popular Vote Compact

The Illinois General Assembly passed legislation that created an agreement among the states to elect the president under a National Popular Vote Compact. LWVIL took no action on this legislation.

At the time when Illinois was one of only four states that had adopted the Compact, delegates to the 2008 LWVUS Convention adopted a fast-track study of the advisability of using it as a method for electing the U.S. President. LWVIL members participated in the study. In May 2009 the national board announced the League's position affirming its support of the direct election of the president and abolition of the Electoral College.

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know and Citizen Participation

1984

LWVUS Position:

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

LWVIL Action

Since the adoption of **Illinois' Open Meetings Act** in 1957 and revisions/ amendments to the act in 1995, LWVIL has supported legislation to strengthen the act and opposed proposals to weaken it. Local

Leagues have used the act frequently while monitoring their local governments.

1983: LWVIL supported the **Freedom of Information Act** and the **Open Records Act**, to allow citizens, civic organization members and the media access to documents, records and reports kept on file by state and local governments.

2004: LWVIL opposed legislation which would have limited the time to sue after receiving notice of denial of appeal of a request for disclosure of documents.

2009: Legislation to strengthen **FOIA** was passed but in November 2010, HB 5154 (PA 96-1483) became law, limiting the public's right to access performance records of public employees; disclosure of performance evaluations is prohibited under the Personnel Record Review Act.

The League continues to monitor the implementation of these acts.

Individual Liberties

1982

LWVUS Position:

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

LWVIL Action

2000: LWVIL supported a series of legislative initiatives designed to codify in Illinois the **Federal Violence Against Women Act** that would have provided civil remedies for gender based violence. LWVIL supported legislation requiring the Secretary of State to determine the extent of **racial profiling in traffic stops**.

2003: LWVIL Convention delegates approved a Will of the Convention calling for LWVUS to **work for abolition of the USA PATRIOT Act** (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools

Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism). Many local Leagues held public education forums on provisions of the Act.

2004: League members were asked to support the **Security and Freedom Ensure (SAFE) Act** to address some of the most problematic provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices

1983

LWVUS position:

Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Recent LWVIL Action

LWVIL supports measures to protect a woman's access to reproductive health care, including the Freedom of Choice Act, and to assure safe entrance to health care facilities. LWVIL opposes efforts to require parental consent and notification for procedures.

Note: July 2013 Illinois Supreme Court upheld 1995 law that requires doctors notify parents of girls 17 and younger who seek an abortion.

1999: League opposed legislative efforts to prohibit so-called "**partial-birth**" abortions and efforts to restrict the use of Medicaid monies to fund abortions. League was successful in persuading the Governor to veto a bill that would have banned payment for medically necessary abortions for women receiving Medicaid health benefits.

2009-11

In 2010 LWVIL, as part of the Campaign for Reproductive Health and Access, signed a letter to the Governor encouraging the state to focus efforts on funding for evidence based programs with proven effectiveness in preventing teen pregnancy. Subsequently

Title V abstinence-only funds were rejected by Illinois in favor of Personal Responsibility Education (PREP) funds included in the Affordable Care Act. LWVIL supported SB1619 introduced in 2011 to implement the PREP in Illinois public schools that offer sex education grades 6-12. The curriculum provides information on both abstinence and prevention. Parents can remove their children from these classes for any reason. Illinois received \$2.33 million from federal PREP to cover training costs.

LWVIL signed on to a CRH&A letter to Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board regarding Certificate of Need in the asset purchase agreement between Vanguard Health Systems and two 2 suburban Chicago hospitals. The objection was to Vanguard's agreeing to maintain religiously-based restrictions on reproductive health services at these hospitals which were non-sectarian before affiliation with Resurrection. Purchase went through with restrictions unchanged.

2011-2013

The Affordable Care Act

Reproductive health was at issue in the 2012 Presidential primaries, general election and in a number of state contests. A proposed HHS regulation that would require insurance companies to provide contraception without co-pay, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine, was opposed by religious organizations (LWVIL sent a letter of support to HHS). Despite exemptions for churches and smaller institutions, but not health systems and universities, the issue remains contentious.

Illinois Reproductive Health Bills

Bills to limit abortion were filed in past three years, part of a national trend. Two bills were introduced in 2012, and 2 similar bills in 2013. HB2683, The Ultrasound Opportunity

Act, requires an ultrasound to be performed prior to any abortion irrespective of medical management, and HB 2684 requires a clinic performing more than 50 abortions a year meet stringent Surgical Treatment Center license requirements. LWVIL sent witness slips to oppose both HB2683 and HB2684. As in previous year these bills did not come up for a vote.

2013-2015

Comprehensive Sex Education, signed into law August 2013 requires public schools that have sex education programs for grades 6-12 to develop a curriculum medically accurate, age appropriate, and complete, teaching abstinence and other methods to prevent pregnancy, and Sexually Transmitted Infections. Parents may have their children opt out of the program. LWVIL supported this bill and similar bills not brought to a vote two previous sessions.

Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby, a challenge to the ACA by employers who contended they cannot be required to provide certain reproductive health coverage for employees if it violates the employers' religious beliefs. The Supreme Court of the U.S. voted 5 to 4 on 6/30/14 to uphold a corporation's right to refuse to provide contraception based on the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act.

LWVUS filed an Amicus Brief in opposition. An excerpt follows.

The League of Women Voters has a long-standing interest in programs and policies that provide access to health care for all residents of the United States. **Since 1992, when League members studied the issue of health care, we have worked for comprehensive health care coverage for all Americans.** The League also has a strong commitment to the concept that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.”

2015 LWVIL filed witness slips and TFA in support of a bill that amends the **Illinois Right of Conscience** law requiring that providers give patients information to make decisions on their health care when the provider has religious objections. Providers can document religious objections if protocols are in place to insure the patient is fully informed of the accepted standard of care for their condition and where to obtain care. Many providers with religious objections, though not all, have such protocols in place. SB 1564 passed the Senate, House deadline extended to 9/30/15.

In 2015 LWVIL again filed witness slips opposing two bills requiring ultrasounds to be viewed by the patient before an abortion and stringent standards for licensure of abortion facilities. Similar bills have been filed in state legislatures across the country often using the same template. So far none have come to a vote in Illinois

2015-17 Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

President Trump and Congressional Republicans vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act as a first order of business in 2017. The ACA required Reproductive Health services including contraception, resulting in a Supreme Court case. A group of religious non-profits challenged employer provision of contraceptives. A divided court returned the case to lower courts for resolution. In May President Trump ended the impasse by issuing an Executive Order exempting religious employers from providing contraception. The appointment of Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court eliminated the even numbered court,

opening speculation on future rulings on reproductive health.

League Activity 2017

HB 40: LWVIL worked with the Reproductive Health and Access Coalition to pass.

The law removed a trigger in 1975 Illinois abortion law should Roe v Wade be struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court; permits abortion funding for Medicaid and state employees. After bill passed both houses in May, a motion to reconsider was filed, a procedural maneuver to allow time for further advocacy. Although the Governor had indicated he would veto the bill, he ultimately signed it into law.

SB1564 Healthcare Right of Conscience Act became law July 2016: amends Illinois Health Care Right of Conscience Act to ensure a patient's right to medically accurate and complete information, including a referral even though a provider has religious or moral objections. The next month the U.S. District Court ruled against enforcement of the law due to start January 1, 2017. More litigation followed, allowing a Rockford clinic temporary relief from the law's provisions. Currently five lawsuits are pending and a complaint filed with the DHHS Office of Civil Rights on behalf of a clinic in Sterling, IL.

LWVIL monitored the following bills restricting abortion. None came to a vote. HB282 amends 1975 Abortion law; HB283 medically unnecessary ultrasound and waiting period for surgical or medication abortion, data filed without confidentiality; HB4108 reinstates trigger provision were Roe vs. Wade struck down, criminalizing abortion, bans state funding; HB4114, SB2241 defines an

unborn child from conception as having US Constitutional rights, no exceptions for rape, incest, women's health, bans DHS grants and referrals for abortion; HB78 eliminates funding for abortions.

For information on Public Policy and LWVIL actions on Reproductive Choices, including Affordable Care Act provisions, see LWVUS position on Health under Social Policy Positions.

Congress and the Presidency

Congress

1972, Revised 1982

LWVUS Position:

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

No recent LWVIL action.

The Presidency

1976, revised 1982

LWVUS Position:

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

No recent LWVIL action.

LWVIL STATE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Constitutional Implementation and Amendments

1977, 1980, 1981, 1988, 1998 and 2003

League of Women Voters of Illinois Position:

LWVIL supports:

- Implementation of the constitutional mandate to the legislature to provide an orderly transfer process when units of government are dissolved or their structure or boundaries are changed.
- An appointed State Board of Education with authority to name the state superintendent of education.
- Flexible annual sessions of the legislature.
- A revenue article with as little restrictive detail as possible, and which does not contain limitations on tax rates or bonding power and does not prohibit any particular tax.
- A graduated income tax.
- Constitutional initiative for the legislative article.
- Compulsory referendum for constitutional amendments.
- Merit selection of judges, with provision for public financing at Supreme and Appellate Court levels.
- Recall of elected judges.

The League supports indirect statutory and constitutional initiative, a process by which citizens can petition for enactment of a law or the passage of a constitutional amendment by the legislature. If the legislature fails to act within a specified time, the proposed law or amendment is placed on the ballot at the next election. (This is in contrast to direct statutory and constitutional initiatives that bypass the legislature. After petitions have received the required number of signatures and are deemed valid, the question is placed on the ballot.)

In addition, the Illinois League opposes constitutional amendments to provide for optional, compulsory or advisory referenda

for statutes initiated by the legislature. The League supports statutory provisions requiring that those who pass and sign petitions be registered voters, and opposes requiring a representative geographical distribution of signers or petitions. (Note: In 1999, the US Supreme Court invalidated Colorado's requirement that referenda circulators be registered voters. In response to these rulings, the Illinois General Assembly changed the Illinois Election Code in 2001. Illinois law now conforms to the Federal Constitutional voting requirements that circulators be at least 18 years old and a United States citizen. (This change in the Election Code essentially voids the LWVIL position that petition passers and signers be registered voters.)

The League supports merit selection as the ideal method to appoint judges to the courts in Illinois. Since 2003, in light of a longtime League goal of limiting political influence in the selection of judges, the escalating cost of judicial races and slow progress towards the goals of merit selection, the League also has advocated working for public financing of judicial elections at the Supreme Court and Appellate Court levels.

Background:

Ratification of the 1970 Constitution was the culmination of almost 30 years of League effort to repair or replace the Constitution of 1870. A Constitutional Study Commission chaired by Representative Marjorie Pebworth, LWVIL President, 1961-1963 deserves much of the credit for passing a resolution by the General Assembly in 1967 to call a Constitutional Convention.

Beginning in 1967, LWVIL embarked on an all-out campaign to convince the electorate of the need for a new constitution. The 1969 LWVIL Convention directed a study on constitutional revision. The League took on the challenge and quickly completed in-depth studies leading to:

- Positions on the executive, legislative, apportionment, cumulative voting, amending process and suffrage.
- Position on local government.
- Reaffirmation of the 1949 judicial position, which had been the basis for modernizing the courts in 1963.

These positions, along with existing positions on education, revenue, environment and human rights, enabled the League to testify on each article of the proposed Constitution. League observers or lobbyists covered all sessions of the Constitutional Convention, and most of the committee hearings.

At a statewide meeting in 1970, the League approved the work of the Constitutional Convention. Again a successful all-out campaign was waged for ratification of the proposed constitution. LWVIL also supported two of the four separate submission items: merit selection of judges and single-member districts, neither of which passed.

Early League efforts to implement the 1970 Constitution were directed toward the Local Government Article in order to strengthen county and municipal government, encourage intergovernmental cooperation, and eliminate townships or restrict their powers. The League voted to drop the local government item from the state program in 1977 because of successes in the first two areas and because abolishing township government was unlikely since they were in the federal Revenue Sharing Program (now eliminated). Local Leagues, however, may work for the dissolution of special districts and/or the elimination of specific townships following local study.

The 1973 LWVIL Convention adopted the constitutional item to incorporate the unfinished business of implementing and amending the Constitution.

1988: The 1987 LWVIL Convention adopted a study of the need for a Constitutional Convention with direction that it be completed in time for the League to play a role in affecting the outcome of the November 1988 referendum on the issue. Members concluded overwhelmingly that a Constitutional Convention was not needed at that time. and the LWVIL undertook a vigorous campaign to defeat the referendum. LWVIL joined Committee to Preserve the Illinois Constitution and participated extensively at both the state and local levels in urging a No vote on Con-Con. The League's efforts were successful, with voters rejecting the Constitutional Convention call by a 2-1 margin.

2008: The 2007 LWVIL Convention adopted another study of the need for a State Constitutional Convention that would be asked of voters on the November 2008 ballot. Of the 31 local Leagues participating, 27 opposed holding a convention; four were undecided. The LWVIL Board voted to adopt a position opposing the call to convention because:

- There was a high risk of exposing the entire constitution to revision and possible loss of the gains made in the 1970 constitution.
- The cost of the convention.
- Relative ease of the amendment process with the 1970 Constitution.
- Concern about the influence of special interest groups in both delegate selection and the convention discussions.
- Concern about the delegate election process.
- Risk that the current dysfunction in state government would extend to the convention, since the General Assembly would set the parameters for the election of delegates as well as the budget for the convention.
- Public education on the issues was lacking.

- Many of the changes that citizens were requesting were available legislatively.

Once again, LWVIL members campaigned to defeat the Convention referendum for a Convention and, as a member of the Alliance to Protect the Illinois Constitution, participated in a strong, highly visible and wide-spreads media campaign to defeat the proposal. On November 4, 2008, the call to convention was defeated with about 58% of the voters saying no.

Specific Constitutional Provisions

The League's 1969/1979 position on **reducing the size of the legislature** with single-member districts and eliminating cumulative voting was implemented with the passage of the cutback amendment. This achievement allowed LWVIL to drop the position from the program in 1989.

1999: LWVIL Convention adopted a study of **cumulative voting**, contingent on available funding. Cumulative voting was a component of the Election Systems Study (1999-2002). In responding to the Election Systems questionnaire submitted to them, **League members did not support a return to cumulative voting.**

Merit Selection of Judges

The League has been a strong advocate for merit selection of judges, working over the years for a merit selection amendment. The legislature has failed thus far to place the issue on the ballot. In October 2000, the LWVIL Board reaffirmed the merit selection position, choosing not to support public financing as an incremental step toward achieving merit selection.

However, at the 2001 LWVIL Convention, a Will of the Convention Motion directed the LWVIL Board to reexamine the merit selection position to determine “a plan of action for implementation of the position in

the current political environment.”

Convention delegates wanted to know if the original study allowed for incremental steps to ensure an independent judiciary.

A review of League history and action dealing with merit selection of judges revealed that, between 1967 and 1986, the League had supported a number of different combination “local option” and mandatory merit selection proposals. LWVIL supported the local option proposals as the “only politically realistic way to go.” Based on this review, the Board concluded, and the 2003 LWVIL Convention concurred, that **support for public financing of judicial elections is in keeping with the position’s goals**, particularly in light of the escalating costs of judicial races and slow progress towards the goals of merit selection.

Local Government

The League continues to support the enactment of legislation to provide a process for the **orderly transfer of power** when units of government are dissolved or their structure or boundaries are changed. Lack of such enabling legislation has been a major obstacle to local decisions to change the structure of government.

Home Rule

The League strongly supports provisions in the 1970 Constitution that allow certain local governments to adopt home rule. The League opposes any attempt to restrict this option. Although the LWVIL position supports the home rule provision in the constitution, a local League must complete a local study if members want to take a position on the question of home rule for their own community.

Recall and Term Limits Amendments

(See State Election Laws)

Other LWVIL action

- Protected the League’s position for an appointed State Board of Education with authority to appoint a State Superintendent by opposing attempts to abolish the Board, elect Board members or elect the Superintendent.
- Opposed proposals to restrict the consideration of appropriations and substantive legislation to single sessions of the legislature.
- Opposed efforts to make the Revenue article more restrictive.
- Opposed efforts to abolish judicial retention, by which a sitting judge runs on a nonpartisan ballot on his or her record only.
- Successfully supported an amendment on the November 1998 ballot calling for the appointment of two citizen members to the Courts Commission. A commission with authority to discipline judges was part of the League’s position on the Constitution in 1970.
- Played a leadership role in coordinating opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment scheduled to appear on the November 1990 ballot. The Tax Accountability Amendment sought to require a three-fifths vote of the General Assembly to increase taxes. In the belief that the proposal went beyond the limited citizen initiative allowed under the Constitution and was contrary to the principles of responsible fiscal policy, the LWVIL formed a coalition which filed an *amicus* brief in the successful legal challenge to the amendment. The League successfully opposed an effort in the state legislature to approve a similar constitutional amendment for the November 1996 ballot.

2009-2011: The Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County—Pilot Project

As merit selection of judges and money in judicial elections again came to the public’s attention, the LWVIL teamed up with the Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, in cooperation with the Chicago Council of Lawyers, to participate in a Judicial Performance Commission of Cook County (JPC). Two LWV members served as Commissioners, educating Cook County voters about which judges should not be retained and to identify judicial performance issues which, while not disqualifying, are things the JPC believes can and should be remedied. Since its inception, the Commission has

- Submitted evaluation reports for 22 judges (with performance issues) to the presiding judges where they sat;
- Met with Chief Judge Evans;
- Designed a court watching program. Court watchers are being identified and trained for program expansion.

For action on constitutional proposals made under other LWVIL positions, see: Term Limits, School Finance, Right to bail - Criminal Justice, and laws protecting children under Children’s Services.

County Government Structure

1991

LWVIL Position:

- Citizens in each county should have the power to initiate change in the structure of county government. Structure refers to form of government; number of county board members; single member, at-large or multimember districts or a combination thereof; county board chairman elected at-large or by peers; or elected county executive.
- Signature requirements for the petition process for citizen-initiated change in the structure of county government must be reasonable. The number of signatures needed should be a percentage of the actual voters in a recent jurisdiction-wide election rather than a percentage of the

registered voters in the jurisdiction. Citizens who have successfully completed the initiative process should be assured of ballot access.

- The Illinois County Executive Act should provide a clear separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. The Act should provide easily understood referendum language for non-home rule counties voting to adopt the county executive form of government.
- County legislative bodies should have the right to require independently elected county officials to adhere to the same personnel and procurement systems as appointed county department heads.

LWVIL Action:

No action has ever been taken by the LWVIL under this position. Local and County Leagues take action under this position.

Consolidation of Governmental Units and Sharing of Major Governmental Services

2015

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports the efficient and effective operation of government. Consolidation of governmental units and the sharing of major governmental services may be a way of promoting the efficient and effective operation of government. In achieving this goal, the League supports a cooperative and transparent process, in which citizens have sufficient and timely information with which to make informed decisions about proposed actions, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review. Administrative and fiscal efficiency should be included in the criteria by which local governments consider whether to consolidate or share major services.

The League supports a system of state-funded grants to local governments to study the

feasibility of the consolidation of governmental units or sharing of governmental services.

In determining whether to support a consolidation/shared services proposal at the local level, as a way of making government more efficient and effective, local Leagues must consider both the adequacy of the process and the likely effects of the proposal's implementation.

In determining whether to support a consolidation/ shared services proposal as a way of making government more efficient and effective, local Leagues should apply the following criteria. While it is not necessary that each standard be met, the League recognizes that these standards represent potential benefits of consolidation, leading to more efficient and effective government:

- Will the proposal result in projected cost savings and a positive effect on taxes over the long term;
- Will the proposal either result in an increased quality and/or efficiency of services or, at a minimum, maintain services at existing levels;
- Will the proposal fairly address disparities in employee contracts;
- Will the proposal result in increased social and economic justice;
- Will the proposal result in a reduction in the number of governmental entities?

As used in this position, consolidation refers to both the process of consolidation and the process of dissolution.

Background:

Adopted at the 2015 Convention by concurrence with a New York LWV position

Action:

2015-17 There has been significant activity on the state and local level to address this issue, however most changes must first occur

in state law. The LWVIL position addresses the factors and process of consolidation or elimination of a governmental entity, thereby allowing advocacy and education in this area. Because this is a complex and highly politicized issue area, the Issues Committee approved the formation of an ad hoc committee made up of members from throughout the state.

The mission of this committee was to take positions on the state level and determine the best way to local League work for the transparent and informed decision making behind consolidation of governmental entities and services, both to reduce the number of taxing bodies in our state and maintain needed government services. The League of Women Voters of Illinois. The committee accomplished the following:

1. Surveyed local leagues about past and present actions taken locally to consolidate governmental entities and services which was completed by March, 2017
2. Identified a specialist to join the LWVIL Issues Committee to regularly report on legislative activity and outcomes
3. Create a specific area on the LWVIL website, and potentially a dedicated FB page, to this topic for statewide and national use. The committee will provided a workshop at the 2017 LWVIL Convention and regionally thereafter.

LWVIL partnered with the statewide organization, Transform Illinois, attending its regular meetings for the last six months and signing on as an organization to support SB1 which expand the pilot initiative in three counties allowing county government take the lead on specific consolidation efforts. Cheryl Budzynski, on behalf of the LWVIL, attended informational hearings in Springfield in April 2017. Hilary Denk provided testimony to the Committee of the Whole about the LWVIL position and factors to consider when enacting legislation for consolidation.

State Election Laws

Registration and Elections

1972 - 1977, revised 1999

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters supports uniformity of election laws and procedures throughout the state. Registration and voting methods should ensure the integrity of the election system, maximize voters' unencumbered access to the ballot, preserve the secrecy of the ballot and ensure accurate and timely vote tabulation. Citizens should have the right to file complaints and writs of mandamus to force compliance with election laws.

The League opposes any legislation that would require a declaration of party at the time of registration or at any time prior to a primary election. A voter's selection of a party's ballot in one primary should not be binding beyond that election.

Registration

A combined in-person and mail registration system should be maintained. Citizens with more than one residence should have the option of choosing which residence will be the primary residence for registration. The length of residency required to register to vote should be the minimum needed to allow adequate time for verification and publication of voter lists. Registration procedures should include safeguards against fraud.

Elections

The League supports an efficient, practical and regular election schedule. At each polling place there should be election judges from more than one of the major political parties. The League supports mandatory training and periodic retraining of all election judges. In tabulating votes, any mark or other indication that clearly shows the intent of the voter should be counted. Additional election officials for tallying ballots should be used when conditions necessitate.

Recent LWVIL Actions:

2014 Voters approved an amendment to the Illinois constitution that added a new Section 8 to Article III, Suffrage and Elections, Titled Voter Discrimination: “No persons shall be denied the right to register to vote or to cast a ballot in an election based on race, color, ethnicity, status as a member of a language minority, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or income”. The League supported its passage.

The League and other voting rights groups supported Illinois Senate Bill 172. It was passed in the closing days of the Fall session and signed by the governor in January 2015. This major election reform bill when fully implemented is expected to modernize Illinois’ voter registration system.

2015-17 Since November 2015, when LWVIL joined the Just Democracy coalition, LWVIL has worked toward passage of automatic voter registration in Illinois.

Although the bill passed in the Illinois General Assembly with bipartisan support in 2016, Governor Rauner’s veto was successful in defeating AVR.

In 2017, a revised AVR bill was introduced (SB1933) by Illinois Senator Andy Manar. It passed unanimously with bipartisan support in both the Illinois House (115-0) and Illinois Senate (55-0) and was signed into law by Governor Rauner in August 2017. LWVIL diligently worked toward passage through the Just Democracy coalition with a number of TFAs, contacts with legislators and the governor’s office plus a number of meetings.

Illinois is now the 10th state (plus Washington, DC) to enact automatic voter registration.

At the November 20, 2017 Illinois State Board of Elections(ISBE) hearing, LWVIL submitted written testimony both electronically and verbally in person on the implementation of AVR in Illinois. Specifically, LWVIL voiced strong support for timely implementation beginning in 2018.

At that hearing, the ISBE chair noted the unanimous bipartisan passage of SB1933 in both the Illinois House and Illinois Senate.

State Board of Elections

1971, revised 1999

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters supports a state board of elections. Such agency should ensure that election laws are applied uniformly and properly throughout the state. The state board of elections should supervise and coordinate: voter registration; candidate filing, reporting, and certification; and the nomination and election processes.

Organization

Members of the state board of elections should be appointed to staggered terms by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. No political party should constitute a majority of the board and the board’s size should ensure that all parts of the state are represented. A means for resolving tie votes should be utilized. The League is not opposed to compensation beyond expenses, reflecting the scope of the job.

Responsibilities

The state board of elections should interpret and compel compliance with the election laws and should have the power to receive complaints, conduct investigations, issue subpoenas, hold hearings, impose penalties and pursue appropriate enforcement action through the courts. The board should appoint an administrative director to oversee the day-to-day operations of the agency and may delegate authority below the state level, as appropriate. To ensure understanding and compliance with election laws and procedures, the board should 1) provide training for registration and election officials and 2) prepare and disseminate information to educate citizens and candidates.

The board should work for codification of election laws and should continually study and recommend improvements in election laws and procedures. It should make annual reports to the General Assembly, the governor and the public.

Election Systems Criteria

2002

LWWIL Position:

The League believes that a good election system must meet the following two criteria:

- An election system should provide stability and continuity of governance by assuring smooth transitions following elections and should produce a legislature that addresses the problems of society effectively and in a timely manner.
- An election system should also be resistant to both outright fraud and forms of political manipulation, such as those involving nominating processes and procedures, gerrymandering, or financing of campaigns.

The League believes these additional criteria should also be considered when judging an elections system. A system should include:

- Encourage close links between legislators and their constituents so as to promote citizen participation in government and help to assure accountability.
- Be easy to use and to administer. Citizens

should be able to cast their votes with ease and to understand the election results without difficulty. Complicated voting procedures that discourage voter participation and create confusion over voting results should be avoided. Consideration should be given to the administrative costs of conducting elections.

- Produce a legislature that fairly and accurately reflects the views found among the public, enabling voters to be confident that their voices will be heard.
- Encourage high-quality political campaigns by instituting procedures that promote discussion of issues and discourage mudslinging and dirty tricks.
- Encourage high voter turnout, recognizing that while administrative matters, such as barriers to registration, can affect turnout, the election system itself can also affect it.

Background:

Election laws and their reform have been a primary concern of the League of Women Voters since its founding at the time women achieved the vote. Action in this area has resulted in:

- Permanent registration
- A shorter ballot
- Reduced residency requirements
- Creation of the appointed State Board of Elections (SBE),
- Consolidation of elections,
- Extension of voting hours to 7 p.m.,
- Liberalization of the deputy registrar law,
- Legislation permitting detainees awaiting trial to vote absentee,
- Amending the election code to permit poll watching by certain civic groups and,
- National lowering of the voting age.
- Compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) in Illinois through legislative and legal action
- Implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)
- Creation of computerized voter registration lists.

While barriers to voting such as voter ID laws have been enacted in other states, the LWVIL closely monitors such proposals for Illinois and is prepared to take swift action if any such measures gain traction here.

Note: Laws governing campaign finance are found in the Illinois Election Code.

LWVIL Action:

1976-77: A study of primary elections did not result in any consensus regarding an open or a closed primary system, the League has opposed legislation that makes participation in the **primary election** more restrictive, particularly the persistent efforts to require pre-primary party registration.

1983: LWVIL worked with a coalition for legislation to enable school officials, librarians, local union officials, and officers of bona fide statewide civic organizations to designate **deputy registrars**. Since then, the League has worked to strengthen the deputy registrar program.

The League has supported legislation to make **absentee and in-person voting** more accessible to disabled citizens and to broaden in-person absentee voting opportunities for all citizens. The League's study of **election consolidation** found that League members were concerned about having a long time period between the primary and the general election and preferred holding elections annually in the spring and November. League efforts to have a later primary have not been successful. The League continues to work for the expansion of voter registration opportunities and election laws codification.

Computerized Voter Registration List

LWVIL was on record as favoring the creation of a computerized statewide voter registration system since the early 1980's and

made that support known to the State Board of Elections (SBE) several times.

1998: The SBE formed a study group to develop conceptual design recommendations for a voter registration computer network and the LWVIL Election Laws Specialist was a member. The group's report was submitted to the SBE in September 1998, but creation of a computerized voter registration system was delayed due to resistance by local election authorities. There was minimal effort to implement the group's recommendations until 2001 when the SBE hired a consulting firm to design a computerized voter registration system. Work on the system was proceeding well until the fall of 2002 when the State faced a budget crisis and FY03 funding for the voter registration project was cut to the FY02 level. LWVIL lobbied unsuccessfully for restoration of the funds. In October 2002, the money ran out and work on the project stopped.

2002: The **Help America Vote Act (HAVA)** passed by Congress in October, included funds to assist states in establishing their voter registration databases. Illinois received some "early money" under this proviso that enabled the SBE to bring the consultants back to complete the Illinois Data Export Application/Uniform Data Form (IDEA/UDF) project. The goal to have the system in place for the March 2004 primary election was not met.

2009: In the spring, the SBE announced that voter registration records from all local election authorities had been added to the Illinois Voter Registration System's database bringing Illinois into compliance with HAVA's requirements.

2017: *LWVIL submitted testimony opposing the continued use of CROSSCHECK, a system developed by the Kansas Secretary of State to*

clean voter rolls between states, due to concerns about security and inaccuracy. The Illinois General Assembly is considering legislation on the same topic during the 2018 session.

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA)

Often called *Motor Voter*, this item was a national priority throughout the 1990's. After NVRA was signed into law in 1993, the action moved to the states. LWVIL and other supporters were unsuccessful in getting the General Assembly to pass the necessary implementing legislation so, when NVRA became effective on January 1, 1995, Illinois was not in compliance.

Immediately LWVIL and others, including the U.S. Department of Justice, filed suits to force Illinois to comply. In response to the consolidated suits both the federal district court and the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the State must comply. The State chose to institute a **two-tier voter registration system** in which persons registering under NVRA provisions were eligible to vote in federal elections only. Those wishing to vote in local and state elections had to register a second time. The League and its coalition partners continued to work for passage of legislation to implement NVRA and to end the two-tier voter registration system. A bill to make the two-tier voter registration system a part of the Illinois Election Code was defeated in the 1995 veto session.

1995: LWVIL filed a second lawsuit in November challenging the constitutionality of the two-tier voter registration system. The League's position prevailed in both the circuit court and the Illinois Appellate Court. In October 1996, the State dropped its legal challenge. NVRA continues to be

implemented under rules and regulations created by the State Board of Elections.

Many of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) provisions also amended NVRA, thus, when the state amended the state code to incorporate all HAVA, NVRA matters were included. The League remains committed to having all NVRA requirements incorporated into the Illinois Election Code.

As Illinois attempted to meet the federal requirements of NVRA, a number of problems arose. In response to problems in the drivers' license facilities, the Secretary of State convened an advisory committee in 1999. The committee was asked to evaluate the existing implementation of the federal Motor Voter Law (NVRA) in Illinois and to recommend administrative improvements.

The LWVIL Election Laws Specialist served on the advisory committee that issued its report in November 2000. Several of the committee's recommendations were implemented in 2001. The Secretary of State's staff continued to make changes in its administrative procedures based on the committee's recommendations and reports that all have been implemented. Additional procedural changes have been initiated by the SOS's office in response to problems as they arose. Monitoring NVRA implementation remains a League priority.

Straight Ticket Voting and the Legislative Process Three Readings Rule

1998: LWVIL joined, as an amicus, in a case before the Illinois Court of Appeals supporting the plaintiffs-appellants' contention that the passage of PA 89-700 violated the three-readings rule (prior to passage legislation must be "read" - presented and/or debated by each chamber of the legislature - three separate times). The legislation banned straight-ticket voting in

Illinois. **The League's brief addressed only the legislative process, not the merits of the legislation.** The Appeals Court accepted the brief; the Illinois Supreme Court denied it. Both courts upheld the lower court ruling. Thus, Illinois no longer has straight-ticket voting.

1993: LWVIL Convention delegates approved the creation of a statewide committee to research the issue of **contested elections** and to work towards reform legislation regarding **automatic recounts** of election results. The committee made a progress report at 1994 Interim Council; however, the resignation of the committee chair immediately after Council suspended work on this issue. No replacement chairperson was found and the item was not readopted at the 1995 LWVIL Convention.

Election Systems

The 1997 LWVIL delegates adopted a Will of the Convention to review State Election Laws positions, including consideration of **proportional representation**. The review committee concluded that proportional representation was too much to study given the burden of the overall position review, and recommended a task force be appointed to consider it. However, there were insufficient volunteers for the task force. Delegates at the 1999 LWVIL Convention adopted the revised state election laws position.

1999: State Convention delegates adopted a study of **cumulative voting for the Illinois House** contingent upon funding from an appropriate foundation source. The Joyce Foundation provided a grant in the summer of 2000 and the League's state committee began its **study of Election Systems** in the fall. Due to the grant's requirements, the study was expanded to include an examination of

other methods for electing representatives besides cumulative voting.

In a caucus meeting at the 2001 LWVIL Convention, members of the state committee presented information and a progress report to convention delegates. The study was readopted by the convention. As a means for reaching member agreement, League members used a mail-in form to identify and rank **criteria important for a good election system**. Responses were received from members in 42 local Leagues and two members at-large. In January 2002, the State Board reported the results and issued a position statement. The position is written in broad terms that will allow the League flexibility in evaluating any proposed electoral system. There is no reference to cumulative voting in the position because the response to the Election Systems questionnaire indicated that **League members did not support a return to cumulative voting**.

Although local Leagues were actively and repeatedly offered a prepared discussion model and pass-through grants to conduct public educational forums on the issue, only one public forum was held and the League was unable to meet the grant's requirement to engage the public in a discussion of election systems. The single forum drew a very limited audience but received good press coverage.

Election Administration Reform

2001 - 2007: At the LWVIL Annual Legislative Briefing in February, League members were given an overview of Illinois' decentralized election administration. During discussion, members agreed that the League should undertake a deeper examination of Illinois' election administration. Following the Convention that year, LWVIL created the Election Administration Reform (EAR) Committee in response to the perceived

problems relating to the November 2000 election. The EAR Committee, working under the League's Making Democracy Work Action Focus, was directed to examine the administration of elections in Illinois. For six years (2001-07) the committee undertook a number of activities, including meeting with representatives of the secretary of state, the state board of elections, and the disabled community. The committee surveyed local election officials and conducted three poll watching projects. In an effort to understand the decision-making processes affecting election administration the committee had ongoing contacts with several local election authorities. The committee reported its findings to League members through articles in the *Illinois Voter*, in memos, and in presentations at state meetings.

Among the issues that the committee looked at were: the use of students as election judges, polling place accessibility, testing and certification of voting equipment, limitations on the issuance of poll watching credentials, recruitment and training of election judges, voting rights for detainees, development of the statewide voter registration database, implementation of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), and the effects of new voting equipment on the electoral process.

The EAR Committee's work led to passage of two League-initiated bills

- 1) Allowing detainees awaiting trial to vote absentee (2005) and
- 2) Permitting civic organizations to poll watch (2007).

The League's revised election laws positions completed and adopted in 1999 enabled the EAR committee to take action when needed. In 2007, the EAR committee was dissolved and its findings were incorporated into the election laws position.

Adoption of HAVA and Election Conduct

2002: HAVA adoption provided federal funds to help states implement changes they were forced to adopt. Illinois moved quickly by creating a state planning committee to develop a HAVA state plan. LWVIL's president served on the planning committee. Early in the process steps were taken to replace the punch card voting equipment and to make administrative changes not requiring election code amendments. Amendments to the Illinois Election Code were achieved with the adoption of Omnibus Elections bills in 2005 and 2006. Summary reports of these two bills were prepared and made available to local Leagues. Additional amendments were included in the 2007 Omnibus Elections bill.

The 2006 primary election was the first test of many of the new procedures and of new voting equipment. Many problems were identified and election officials worked to correct them before the November 2006 general election; however, that election revealed many technical problems in several election jurisdictions. They were being addressed through the combined efforts of the State Board of Elections, the affected local election authorities, and the voting equipment vendors. Reports from the April 2007 election showed fewer problems but turnout is typically low for odd-year spring elections.

2009-2011: LWVIL monitored press reports about voting problems, informed League members about legislative changes relating to voter registration, residency requirements, absentee ballot applications, Early Voting regulations and new rules governing voting by military personnel and their families.

Two new provisions that became effective in January 2011 should make voting a bit easier -- the Primary date was moved back to March and candidates for governor and lieutenant governor must now run as a team in the primary. LWVIL did not act on either of

these bills; our position favors a later primary date and we do not have a position on candidates running as a team.

2011-2013: LWVIL continued to watch legislative activity in the Illinois General Assembly and took action when its positions applied. Much of the legislation pertaining to the Election Code was handled in omnibus Election bills created by the legislators during the session. Often these bills included amendments requested by the State Board of Elections that clarify and/or correct legislation adopted previously. Among the topics that have been addressed recently are changes in the rules for deputy registrars, alterations in the signature requirements on petitions for state senators and representatives, and, extending grace periods for voter registration.

The legislature also authorized the creation of an on-line voter registration system, clarified the rules for processing provisional ballots and passed legislation providing that persons who are 17 years old on the date of the primary election may vote at the primary if they are otherwise qualified and will be 18 years old on the date of the General Election.

The State Board of Elections began developing the on-line voter registration system and preparing the local election authorities for its implementation. It is expected that the system will be up and running by July 1, 2014, as required by the statute. The system was ready in June 2014.

A number of bills were introduced that would require voters to present a government-issued photo ID in the polling place. The League was prepared to oppose them. They never got out of committee. The League will continue to follow election laws activities supporting efforts that ease citizens' access to the election process and oppose any actions that erect barriers to voter registration and the voting process.

2013-2015 LWVIL activity in Election Laws was centered primarily in the General Assembly during this Biennium. Some of the highlights were legislation that permits 17-year-olds to vote in the primary in even-numbered years, another relating to electoral boards and a third providing for the dissolution of a township by referendum. Other laws enacted included: one encouraging school districts to close school or hold an Institute Day when a school building is being used as a polling place; and another directed the State Board of Elections to place a statewide advisory question relating to a tax on income greater \$1,000,000 on the November, 2014 ballot. Voters approved this proposal, but no action was taken in response to this vote.

The 2014 session's 194-page Omnibus Elections bill made many temporary changes in the election code. These were tested in the November election. The General Assembly returned to work and passed SB172 which made the temporary changes permanent. Among them were including provisions for extending early voting and changing the postmark deadline for email ballots to Election Day. The governor signed the bill in January 2015. The League supported this legislation. The State Board of Elections and the various local election authorities are mandated to implement this legislation, although the current budget impasse is delaying the process.

Term Limits

1992, 1999

LWVIL Position:

The League opposes constitutional or statutory term limitations for members of the General Assembly based on the League's support for accountability, representativeness, and effective performance and for a dynamic balance of

power between the legislative and the executive branches.

(See LWVUS position Congress and The Presidency)

Background and LWVIL Action:

The LWVUS Board announced in 1991 that the League opposes term limits for members of the U.S. Congress. Delegates to the LWVUS 1992 Convention approved a motion allowing state and local Leagues to take action against term limits for state and local legislative offices based on the national position.

The LWVIL Board approved extending the position to the Illinois General Assembly and 1993 LWVIL Convention delegates concurred.

In the fall of 1994, the League was prepared to oppose a proposed constitutional amendment to limit the terms of state legislators to eight years. The question was not placed on the ballot because the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the petition calling for the referendum was unconstitutional.

Based on the national position, local Leagues may *oppose* term limits for their county/village board or city council without a local study. However, if a League wants to *support* term limits for these local officials, a local study and consensus must be conducted. A local position to support term limits cannot be based on issues of representativeness, accountability or effective performance, or on a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches because these criteria are the basis for the national and state positions opposing term limits.

The 2009 Convention delegates recommended an update to the Recall and

Term Limits position but the position was not reviewed due to a lack of volunteers.

The General Assembly then placed an amendment to the Illinois Constitution to provide for a special election to **recall a Governor** on the November 2010 election ballot. A LWVIL committee developed a brochure informing citizens about the provisions and the pros and cons of the amendment to supplement the official material provided by the state. 65% of voters were in favor and it was adopted.

State Redistricting

1993

LWVIL Position:

The League supports a redistricting process which is:

- timely and orderly and which includes a formal announced timetable,
- makes information and related data available to all who wish to participate in the process,
- offers ample opportunities for expert testimony and public reaction to the proposed maps,
- encourages compromise among partisan representatives,
- avoids a partisan stalemate, and
- results in maps which offer the voters a choice of candidates for election.

The League supports the following criteria for drawing state legislative districts:

1. Population equity: The average deviation among all districts in each house shall not exceed a range of 1 percent, with no more than a 5 percent variance between the most populated and the least populated districts. Districts shall be based on current census statistics.

2. All districts shall be drawn in compliance with the United States Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments.
3. Compact and contiguous: All districts shall be compact, with the smallest perimeter possible, and contiguous, adjacent to one another with more than a single point of contiguity. Areas connected only at points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.
4. Boundaries:
 - a. The number of counties, towns and cities divided among more than one district shall be as small as possible.
 - b. Districts shall follow existing political boundaries (i.e., county, municipal, ward lines), as far as possible.
 - c. No city block shall be subdivided, since a city block is the smallest parcel for which census data are available.
 - d. Where possible, district lines shall follow permanent and easily recognized features, such as toll ways, expressways, highways, streets, rivers, and clear geographical features, and when practical, shall coincide with census tract boundaries.
5. No district shall be drawn with the intent to favor a political party or incumbent legislator or congressman.
6. Each state senatorial district shall consist of two entire house districts as currently stipulated in the state constitution. Ideally each state senatorial district shall be entirely within a single U.S. Congressional district.

These criteria may be applied to any redistricting process.

(Also see LWVUS Apportionment)

Background:

Prior to the adoption of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, LWVIL developed a position relating to apportionment that included a

preferred method for redistricting legislative districts after each decennial census. Article IV, Section 3 of the 1970 Constitution details procedures to be followed in legislative redistricting. Five redistrictings have taken place using these rules. In 1981, 1991, and 2001, because there was no agreement on the proposed maps in either the legislature or the Legislative Redistricting Commission, it was necessary to select a tiebreaker member for the Legislative Redistricting Commission. The selected maps reflected the partisanship of the tiebreaker member's vote. Suits were filed each time and the new legislative districts were determined based on court rulings. In 2011 the governor and both chambers of the General Assembly were controlled by the same party and the maps were drawn with little input from the public.

Recent LWVIL Action:

2009: At the 2009 LWVIL Convention, delegates voted to make an accurate census count and redistricting action focus issues for the 2009 – 2011 biennium. True Census Count 2010 and Redistricting Reform actions included:

- **2010 Census Activities**

LWVIL undertook a major role striving to ensure a complete and accurate count of all residents in Illinois during Census 2010. Governor Quinn named LWVIL the chair of the Illinois Complete Count Committee. Several local leagues took an active interest and participated in census activities of their own, including creating local complete count committees. Census 2010 counted 12,830,632 Illinois residents and while Illinois gained in population, it lost a Congressional seat. Illinois had 25 districts in 1960; after the 2012 elections, Illinois - sent 18 members to Congress.

- **Redistricting Activities**

Citizens' Initiative-- In 2009 in anticipation of the redistricting of Illinois General

Assembly districts, LWVIL and other organizations formed the **Illinois Fair Map Amendment** initiative, the goal of which was to amend the Illinois Constitution by collecting enough signatures on petitions to get the initiative placed on the November 2010 election ballot. From January through April 2010, local Leagues held informational meetings about the amendment and circulated petitions. LWVIL led the coalition, met with editorial boards and collected the completed petitions. LWVIL was invited to testify before the Senate Redistricting Committee as well as the House Judiciary about the goals of the amendment. Despite these efforts, the number of signatures was insufficient to get the initiative placed on the ballot; time and money (not enough of each) worked to the petition effort's disadvantage. However, the work LWVIL did during this period galvanized awareness of the need for redistricting reform.

Redistricting-- LWVIL launched its census and redistricting project in February 2009 and worked with local Leagues throughout the state organizing presentations and forums to educate League members and communities about the redistricting process in Illinois and the need for change. Other activities included inviting Justin Levitt from the Brennan Center to speak at the February 2010 Issues Briefing; preparing materials and convening a training session held in September to prepare League members to speak on redistricting issues; and offering a workshop on the topic at the 2011 Issues Briefing. Local Leagues also wrote letters to the editor about redistricting, met with their local legislators on the topic and asked questions at candidates' forums and as part of Vote 411.

2010: A group of reform and civil rights organizations came together under a coalition umbrella -- the **Illinois Campaign for Accountable Redistricting** (ICAR) to show that Illinois could change the way it redistricts

itself using principles developed during the Fair Map initiative. The coalition obtained grants to purchase software to draw maps, employ staff, promote the process and engage input from the public. LWVIL worked in coalition with other organizations to change the redistricting process using these principles.

2011: As part of their promise to introduce transparency to the redistricting process, the Illinois House and Senate Redistricting Committees held hearings from March to May to receive public comment on the redistricting process and eventually comment on the initial legislative map. LWVIL was invited to testify and members from eight Leagues presented LWVIL testimony.

In 2011 Democrats controlled both chambers in the General Assembly as well as the governor's office, and they used their power to draw maps which would allow their party to maintain control of the General Assembly and win more seats for Democrats in the U. S. House of Representatives. The League criticized the maps. The League also filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the maps for the U. S. House and the Illinois General Assembly. The lawsuit was dismissed.

2013-2014: Yes for Independent Maps – Ballot Initiative for 2014

The LWVIL supported the efforts of the *Yes for Independent Maps* initiative to place the Illinois Independent Redistricting Amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The proposed amendment to Article IV, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution would have changed the way the Illinois General Assembly House and Senate districts are drawn after the US Census by providing for an independent commission to draw maps.

LWVIL Redistricting Campaign Efforts included:

- Approval by the LWVIL Board on September 7, 2013 to support the *Yes for Independent Maps* initiative.
- Updates in the LWVIL E-News between September 2013 and July 2014 including:
 - An explanation of LWVIL support of the amendment
 - Information on obtaining, circulating and returning petitions
 - An explanation of why the amendment did not include a way to redraw Congressional Districts
 - Ideas on locations to pass petitions
 - Progress of the ballot initiative
- Presenting a plenary session at the Annual Issues Briefing in February 2014, titled *Redistricting: What's Been Happening Since 2011?* Speakers included Ryan Blitstein, CHANGE IL Senior Advisor, Yes for Independent Maps, Ruth Greenwood, Fellow, Chicago Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law and Mary Schaafsma, ED LWVIL.
- Making a statement at a press event on May 1, 2014 when the petitions were delivered to the State Board of Elections Office in Springfield.
- Sending a TFA asking for volunteers to help validate signatures on the petitions at the *Yes for Independent Maps* campaign office.

In July 2014, the *Yes for Independent Maps* campaign decided not to further pursue its efforts to get the amendment on the November ballot. The *Yes* initiative failed because of a lack of sufficient valid signatures and a ruling in the Circuit court of Cook County that while Legislative Redistricting appears to be a valid subject for a citizen initiative, the proposed amendment was not limited to structural and procedural subjects as required by the Illinois Constitution.

LWVIL participated in a debriefing of the *Yes for Independent Maps* Campaign in September 2014 and contributed to the discussion about positive aspects and lessons learned from the campaign.

LWV Chicago

In 2014, the LWV of Chicago filed a lawsuit, which challenged the City of Chicago ward maps. Chicago drew maps which protected

41 incumbents and thus avoided a referendum on the maps. Chicago also began to use the new maps, prior to aldermen being elected for the new wards in 2015. The lawsuit, claiming that the city's ward re-map violated the "one person, one Vote" principle and therefore denied Chicago residents equal representation in City council, was dismissed by the court.

LWVUS

Delegates to the 2014 LWVUS Convention recognized the importance of national redistricting reform by adopting a comprehensive three-part program combining study and review of key specific structures of American democracy, with one of the three parts being , "A review of the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress ... for the purpose of developing action steps".

2015: Independent Map Amendment – Ballot Initiative for 2016

A new petition campaign to establish a non-partisan, independent commission to draw legislative maps was formally announced on April 28, 2015. Mary Kubasak, LWVIL President, is a member of the Board of Directors for the *Independent Map Amendment* ballot initiative. The LWVIL Redistricting Committee met on April 29, 2015 to discuss the League's involvement in general public education on redistricting and advocacy work on the Independent Map Amendment. The ballot initiative campaign kickoff for LWVIL took place at convention

in June. There was a speaker at the Plenary Session and Caucuses on the initiative. Local Leagues members are holding meetings to educate their members and the public about the initiative and circulating petitions to obtain signatures to get the *Independent Map Amendment* on the November 2016 ballot.

2015-2016: Independent Map Amendment – Ballot Initiative for 2016

The LWVIL supported efforts to place the Independent Redistricting Amendment initiated in April 2015 on the November 2016 General Election Ballot. The proposed amendment to Article IV, Section 3 of the Illinois Constitution would have changed the way the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) House and Senate districts are drawn after the US Census by providing for an independent commission to the draw maps.

LWVIL Redistricting Campaign Efforts included:

- Having the LWVIL President serve as a member of the Board for this ballot initiative.
- Kicking off the ballot initiative campaign for LWVIL at the June 2015 convention by
 - Providing a campaign tool kit
 - Presenting strategy for local League campaign participation
- Participation by local Leagues in
 - Collecting petition signatures
 - Holding public meetings on the redistricting process and the proposed amendment
 - Presenting programs to students in high school civics classes
- Conducting a workshop, *Persuading the Public that the Amendment Will Make a Difference*, at the February 2016 Issues Briefing
- Joining in the filing of an amicus on July 28, 2016 to the Illinois Supreme Court
- Participating in press conferences

The *Independent Maps* campaign was the most recent attempt to get a redistricting amendment on the ballot. The Independent Maps Board was bipartisan and had a broad range of representation from non-profits and the business community.

On May 6, 2016 the bipartisan *Independent Maps* coalition submitted over 570,000 petition signatures to the Illinois State Board of Elections. The ISBE sampling of signatures, found a 73% validity rate – well in excess of the 290,199 signatures required to place the amendment on the November 8th ballot.

A lawsuit the People’s Map V. The Illinois State Board of Elections was filed and heard by Cook County Circuit Court Judge Diane Larsen. On July 18, 2016 Judge Larsen handed down a ruling that the Independent Map Amendment was unconstitutional.

Independent Maps filed an appeal directly to the Illinois Supreme Court. On July 28th LWVIL as part of a coalition filed an amicus with the Illinois Supreme Court urging it “to allow democracy to prevail and to let the people have their vote” on the amendment. Independent Maps final brief to the Court on August 9th argued the lower court ruling if not reversed “would eviscerate the constitutional right conferred on the people of Illinois by the 1970 constitution to bypass self-interested legislators and directly propose needed reforms.”

The Independent Map Amendment did not appear on the November 8, 2016 Election Ballot. On Thursday, August 25th the Illinois Supreme Court ruled 4 to 3, along party lines, affirming the Cook County Circuit Court decision that the proposed amendment failed to meet constitutional requirements.

The Court decision rested on the fact that the job duties of the Auditor General are not stated in Article IV Section 3, the Legislative Article, of the Illinois Constitution. Therefore the proposal was a violation of provision for Constitutional Initiative that limits amendments to structural and procedural subjects contained in Article IV. The Court only ruled on one of the seven counts objecting to the proposed amendment.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POSITIONS

Summary of League of Women Voters of the
United States Positions and
Major Action by the Illinois League
**Complete LWVUS Positions in Impact on
Issues.**

*For the complete text of each position, see
LWVUS Impact on Issues.*

WVUS International Relations Position:
Promote peace in an interdependent world by
working cooperatively with other nations and
strengthening international organizations.

United Nations
1977, Revised 2002

LWVUS Position:
Support a strong, effective U.N. and endorse
the full and active participation of the United
States in the U.N. System.

Trade

LWVUS Position:
Support a liberal U.S. trade policy aimed at
reducing trade barriers and expanding
international trade.

Relations with Developing Countries

LWVUS Position:

Current Efforts: The Independent Maps Board decided not to pursue another citizen initiative. The limited court ruling makes it difficult to pursue another attempt. LWVIL is participating in the IL Redistricting Collaborative. The Collaborative is working to develop Redistricting Principles and Strategies to effect change to the redistricting process for the IL General Assembly. U.S. interests in developing countries should reflect the reality of global interdependence.

Arms Control
1983, Updated 2010

LWVUS Position:
Arms control measures are essential to
reduce the risk of war and increase global
stability.

Military Policy & Defense Spending

1984, Revised 1986

LWVUS Position:
The U.S. government should seek to protect
its interests at home and abroad through the
use of nonmilitary measures, including
diplomacy, mediation and multilateral
cooperation. This position also addresses
Nuclear Deterrence, the North Atlantic Treaty
Organization, and Other Commitments

LWVIL action

2000 - 2002: Illinois local Leagues
participated in both the Trade and U.N.
position updates. Local Leagues educated
their members and the public on international
relations issues with seminars and lectures
and through *Great Decisions* discussions.

2003: State and local Leagues urged the U.S.
President to work with the United Nations to
resolve the situation with Iraq.

**UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of
Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

LWVIL has consistently urged our Senators to ratify CEDAW. Although the U.S signed the pact in 1980, it remains the only country to have signed but not ratified it. The 186 ratifying countries include all America's major allies, while the seven remaining non-ratifying states include Iran, Sudan, Somalia and three small Pacific Island nations.

Commissioners who passed ratification resolutions.

2010: IL Sen. Richard Durbin, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Human Rights and the Law, held the first CEDAW hearing and pledged to work for ratification.

2004: LWVIL supported the Illinois General Assembly and the Cook County Board of

LWVUS NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Positions and Major Action by the Illinois League
Complete LWVUS Positions in Impact on Issues.

LWVUS Position:

The LWVUS believes that Natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.

Resource Management 1958-1986

LWVUS Position:

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

Background:

LWVUS Convention 2010 agreed that “**fracking**” (pumping high pressure water or chemicals underground to fracture geologic formations and release natural gas) poses a threat to drinking water and other water resources. State Leagues took the lead in working to block these mining processes that release contaminated and polluted waters.

Fracking

LWVIL Action:

The 2013 LWVIL Convention took place as two separate bills related to hydraulic fracturing were pending in the state legislature. Hydraulic fracturing, commonly referred to as “fracking” is a process by which high pressure water, sand and unidentified chemicals are pumped underground to fracture geologic formations in order to release fossil fuels. The process poses a threat to water and other natural resources and increases the incidence of earthquakes.

Convention delegates voted to continue work for a moratorium and, if the bill regulating the process becomes law, delegates agreed that LWVIL work for the most effective rules to protect Illinois residents, environment, tourism, sufficient funding and staffing to enforce those rules, and provisions for public input and local control by those most affected by the introduction of hydraulic fracturing in Illinois.

Child Safe Chemicals

LWVIL Action:

In 2005, LWVIL welcomed the creation of a new House Committee – the Environmental Health Committee – during the legislative session. The League worked successfully with other groups to pass legislation considered by this committee that would ban a class of toxic chemicals commonly used as **flame retardants** in consumer products in favor of safer alternatives. These chemicals, commonly known as PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), are rapidly accumulating in our bodies, homes, and in the fish and sediment of Lake Michigan.

- With increasing evidence of the health effects resulting from the exposure to toxic chemicals in our environment and consumer products, LWVIL monitored legislation eliminating some of the most dangerous chemicals found in certain consumer products.
- Since children are the most vulnerable to these chemicals, **Child-Safe Chemical Acts** were introduced during the 2008 and 2009 legislation sessions. Although this legislation failed to receive support, the Chicago City Council voted to ban the use of one of these toxic chemicals, bisphenol A (BPA), in baby bottles and sippy cups, effective January 31, 2010.
- A TFA was issued supporting the phasing out of the **toxic flame retardant** decaBDE. Legislation phasing out the use of this toxic chemical commonly found in TV's, mattresses, and other consumer products also failed to receive support.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

LWVUS Position:

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

Climate Change: Air Quality

LWVUS Position:

Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

2015-17 LWVUS Climate Action: Given the federal government's current retreat from the fight against climate change, strong climate action at the state and local levels has become more important than ever. (See LWVUS Toolkit for Climate Action at http://participate.lwv.org/c/9217/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_id=em_KEY=3766)

The LWVUS Grassroots Action Priorities on Climate Change include:

- **Price on Carbon:** LWVUS supports carbon pricing in the form of either a carbon tax/fee or cap-and-trade as a market tool to decrease demand for fossil fuels and make alternatives more affordable.
- **Our Children's Trust:** Delegates to the 2016 LWVUS overwhelmingly approved a resolution *"that the LWVUS Board should consider signing onto an amicus brief with the 21 youth plaintiffs from Our Children's Trust." a coalition of young people suing the federal government for failure to protect them and their future from the ravages of climate change.*
- **Energy Efficient Buildings:** LWVUS supports measures to curb the CO2 emissions from buildings (about 40% of the total) and improve energy efficiency (currently about 41% of energy consumption).
- **Renewable Energy:** LWVUS supports expansion of renewable energy electricity generation from wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and hydropower.

- ***Adapting to Climate:** Adaptation — actions taken to decrease vulnerability and limit the impacts of climate change and to take advantage of beneficial opportunities*

US EPA Authority

At the federal level, as attempts are made to eliminate the U.S. EPA’s authority to enforce air pollution standards, the focus at LWVUS has been on **Clean Air Defense**, challenging officials to protect people from the health hazards of air pollution.

Recent LWVIL Action:

2009-2015

- LWVIL actively supported (with LWVUS permission) the Waxman-Markey **cap and trade** system to reduce industrial pollution emissions
- Supported a strong **Clean Air Act and the EPA’s authority** to enforce it, including meetings with staff of Senators Durbin and Kirk
- **Clean Car Act:** LWVIL, as part of the Illinois Climate Action Network, lobbied for state legislation requiring automakers to meet the same high emissions standards for new cars and light trucks already set in 14 other states. The legislation failed to pass in Illinois but the California standards were mandated at the federal level beginning with the 2012 model year.
- League testified (with LWVUS permission) at US EPA hearings in Chicago, in support for new federal EPA regulations to limit mercury and other air toxics emissions from coal-fired and oil-fired power plants and encouraged immediate implementation of the new standards.
- In accordance with the LWVUS position, Climate Change was adopted as a action focus for the 2011-2013 and 2013-

2015 biennia by LWVIL Convention delegates.

- LWVIL signed a coalition letter to Senators Durbin and Kirk expressing our support of the EPA’s Clean Air Act.
- The LWVIL joined other environmental groups in opposing the Tenaska coal-to-gas plant in Taylorville, IL; The “clean coal” project was scrapped in 2013 although the companies involved are expected to try to renew the effort in the coming years.
- LWVIL, with LWVUS permission, testified at US EPA hearing in support of Proposed Tier 3 Tailpipe and Evaporative Emissions and Vehicle Fuel Standards.
- LWVIL presented testimony at an EPA hearing supporting limits on mercury emissions from power plants.

2015-17 LWVIL Action:

- Testified before the EPA in support for new federal regulations limiting mercury and air toxics from coal and oil burning power plants
- Opposed the Tenaska coal-to-gas “clean coal” power plant proposal
- Testified before the EPA in support of strong tailpipe and Evaporative Emissions and Vehicle Fuel standards
- Testified before the EPA in support of limits on mercury emissions from power plants

After the 2016 presidential elections, the new administration in Washington made sweeping directives to all federal agencies to reduce/remove as many regulations as possible, claiming they are “burdensome” to businesses. People with strong ties to the fossil fuel industries and people who claim that Climate Change is not caused by human activity have been appointed to head agencies that are charged with protecting the health and well-being of the nation as a

whole. The EPA and other science agencies have been specifically targeted with budget cuts, reductions in staff and authorization to act while, at the same time, the new administration is actively working to ensure that coal and oil are our nation's dominant energy sources.

The authority of the EPA to regulate greenhouse gasses is also being challenged in the courts and the federal Clean Power Plan that was adopted by the previous administration is being dismantled.

Energy

LWVUS Position:

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

Recent LWVIL Action:

2010: LWVIL participated in the Shriver Institute's symposium on Climate Change and Low Income Communities focusing on home retrofitting for energy efficiency, consumer cost saving, and green business/job opportunities for the area.

2009-2011 Illinois Smart Grid

The Smart Grid is a complete modernization of the electric system to improve efficiency, reduce outages, integrate alternative energy supplies such as wind energy, and help consumers manage their energy usage and costs. A key component of the Smart Grid is the Smart Meter that will allow consumers to respond immediately to price fluctuations and meet the utilities' emissions reduction goals through energy efficiency.

League participated in the ISGI Collaborative for Smart Grid implementation mandated by state legislation and the Illinois Commerce

Commission. The Collaborative considered a wide range of issues that would shape Smart Grid deployment in Illinois including consumer and environmental concerns, cost recovery for the utilities, and technology.

2011: The League did not support so-called "Smart Grid" legislation because it would allow the major utilities to bypass the IL Commerce Commission hearing process for rate increases, thus placing the burden of Smart Grid costs directly on consumers. Legislation passed in the General Assembly but was then vetoed by the governor. During the Fall Veto Session, the Legislature added a trailer bill addressing the concerns of citizen, governmental *and business groups and overrode the veto.*

US EPA Authority

At the federal level, as attempts are made to eliminate the U.S. EPA's authority to enforce air pollution standards, the focus at the LWVUS is now on **Clean Air Defense**, challenging officials to protect people from the health hazards of air pollution.

2015 Clean Power Plan

After years of supporting a Renewable Portfolio Standards Fix (RPS Fix), in 2015 LWVIL has shifted focus to several sets of bills introduced in the General Assembly to satisfy the state's requirements for the EPA's Clean Power Plan. The RPS Fix is absorbed by these bills. The House and Senate bills supported by most of the state's environmental groups are called the Clean Jobs Bill.

2015-2017 Illinois Clean Jobs Bill

After years of supporting a Renewable Portfolio Standards "Fix" (RPS Fix), LWVIL shifted focus in 2015 to several sets of bills, known collectively as the IL Clean Jobs Bill, that would satisfy the state's

requirements for the EPA's Clean Power Plan, including an RPS fix.

2016: LWVIL joined the Clean Jobs Coalition to advocate for those measures that would support expanded renewable energy in the state.

2016: Competing legislative proposals - supported by the large electric utilities on the one hand and by environmentalists on the other - finally merged into a comprehensive Future Energy Jobs Bill. This massive piece of legislation included subsidies to keep nuclear and coal plants online, but also fixed the RPS, introduced a demand charge, and increased energy efficiency investments in the state. LWVIL supported specific components but not the entire bill in part because amendments were being introduced right up to the final votes.

Land Use

LWVUS Position:

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

(See also LWVIL Land Use Policies)

Water Resources

LWVUS Position:

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

Recent LWVIL Action:

Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes

Recognizing the threats to the health of the Great Lakes, Illinois League members are active participants in the League of Women Voters Lake Michigan Region (LWVLMR). In 2013, the LWVIL Convention adopted the Great Lakes Ecosystem position. For information about LWVIL Action pertaining to the Great Lakes, see LWVIL Water position..

In 2012, LWVIL signed on to a letter requesting full funding of federal habitat restoration programs despite budgetary sequestration.

LWVIL submitted comments to the Illinois EPA asking for stronger measures in the NPDES water discharge permit for Midwest Generation's Waukegan Generation Plant in August, 2013. Concerns surrounded open storage of coal ash and discharge of heated water, among other issues.

LWVIL collaborated with the LWV Lake Michigan Region to produce a public education project about flooding, nonpoint source pollution caused by stormwater runoff, and green infrastructure solutions. Between February, 2014, and October, 2015, 28 programs were presented in Illinois communities, most arranged by local Leagues.

Asphalt Sealants made with coal tar pitch, a byproduct of refining coal, contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). PAHs are known human carcinogens that are also toxic to aquatic life. Dust from the sealants created by abrasion of surfaces by tires and snow-plows is washed into streams, rivers, and lakes by stormwater. Tests in DuPage County indicate that, as in other urbanized areas, more than half of the PAHs in the waterways come from coal tar sealants. In 2014, LWVIL signed on to three letters supporting bans on coal tar sealant use and sales.

The reach of the Clean Water Act (CWA) had been made vague by Supreme Court decisions, requiring the US EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers to propose a definition of the "Waters of the United States" covered by the CWA. In 2014, LWVIL submitted comments supporting the draft rule and also signed on to a letter of support originated by the Healing Our Waters Coalition. Additionally, LWVIL worked with

the LWV Cook County and signed on to two letters urging the Cook County Board of Commissioners to support the rule. The rule went into effect in August, 2015, but lawsuits filed by states led to a stay of its implementation in October, 2015.

Waste Management

LWVUS Position:

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

(See LWVUS *Impact on Issues* for **Criteria for Siting Waste Disposal Facilities.**)

LWVIL Action:

Source reduction, waste reduction and recycling measures have been high LWVIL priorities. Over the years, LWVIL supported:

- restrictions on packaging,
- recycling initiatives,
- planning mandates,
- the local review process for siting of landfills or incinerators,
- stronger state regulation of hazardous waste and low-level radioactive waste,
- pollution prevention initiatives and
- funding for cleanup of hazardous waste sites.

LWVIL also served on the state Task Force for the Development of Recycled Markets and on statewide outreach panel addressing environmental, health, and safety issues related to **chemical manufacturing.**

Many local Leagues were active in expanding recycling mandates and organizing waste reduction and recycling projects in their communities and co-sponsored IEPA household hazardous waste pick-up days.

2005: LWVIL also supported legislation strengthening Illinois EPA's enforcement authority when dealing with hazardous releases into the soil and groundwater, protecting public health and the environment

as well as promoting public participation in environmental decision-making.

Nuclear Issues

LWVUS Position:

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

For further details on the LWVUS Nuclear Issues position including **Siting/Storage of High-Level and Low-Level Wastes, Transportation of Nuclear Wastes, and Defense wastes**, please refer to *LWVUS*

Impact on Issues. The LWVUS position also contains lengthy statements on Appropriate State Action (pertaining to participation in regional compacts) and Inter-League Cooperation on nuclear issues.

Recent LWVIL Action:

In early 2015, at the request of the Downers Grove-Woodridge-Lisle League, the LWVIL prepared testimony to present to the DuPage County Board opposing construction of an underground low-mid grade nuclear waste storage facility near the shores of Lake Huron. LWVIL and LWVUS approved the testimony and all the DuPage Leagues signed on. The County adopted a resolution opposing the project and it is now part of their legislative agenda in Washington. They join Cook County and hundreds of other local governments in both the US and Canada opposing the facility.

LWVIL Action:

2015: LWVIL and local leagues in DuPage and Cook Counties (with LWVUS permission) successfully lobbied local units of government to take action opposing construction of an underground low/mid grade nuclear waste storage facility near the shores of Lake Huron. The proposed facility is opposed by hundreds of local and tribal governments in both the US and Canada; the

Canadian government is still considering the proposal in 2017.

Going forward: Unresolved nuclear storage and transportation issues are an important state concern given that Illinois has the most nuclear power facilities of any state in the country. Nuclear waste is currently stored on-site, at both operating and retired facilities. A new presidential administration in Washington, as well as continuing reports of radiation problems at the damaged Fukushima (Japan) nuclear plant, and radiation leaks at a military nuclear waste facility in Hanford, WA in 2017, are bringing nuclear waste issues back to the forefront. Although the Obama administration tabled plans for deep storage of spent nuclear fuel at Yucca Mountain, NV, the new administration and members of Congress began steps to restore the site in the summer of 2017.

Public Participation

LWVUS Position:

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

LWVIL Action: LWVIL regularly takes action on Natural Resources positions, applying the principles listed in the position.

Agriculture Policy

1988, 2014

LWVUS Position:

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.

Federal Agriculture Policies: Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal

antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide adequate safety of our food supply.

LWVIL Action:

●LWVUS demonstrated great foresight when, in 1988, it adopted an agriculture position supporting sustainable agriculture. In 2011, the Illinois League, seeing increased public interest in sustainability as well as division over contentious food and agricultural issues, appointed a Sustainable Food & Water Issue Specialist to the Issues Committee.

As the public continued to question where and how its food is produced, LWVIL raised the profile of agriculture and food issues within League, through both education and advocacy, at the local and national level. To that end, caucus presentations on agriculture/food were held at the 2010 & 2012 national conventions and 2011 & 2013 Illinois state conventions, the 2012 Illinois Issues Briefing, and to local Leagues during this time frame. In addition, LWVUS was petitioned in 2012, 2013, and 2014 to make agriculture issues a legislative priority; Illinois League members met with LWVUS on several occasions to discuss advocacy efforts, as well as with members of Congress and their staff on Farm Bill conservation funding.

With growing member interest and momentum building, Illinois Leagues collaborated with the Chester County, PA League at the 2012 national convention on a motion to update the agriculture position adopted in 1988. Convention delegates approved the motion and in 2013 the background study materials, consensus questions, and Leaders' Guide were developed. Following study and consensus in

2014, LWVUS adopted an updated agriculture position in May 2014. The 2014 study examined many contemporary topics (e.g. genetically modified foods and their labeling, use of antibiotics in animal production, concentrated animal feeding operations) but did not update parts of the 1988 position (e.g. agriculture and trade).

●As an outgrowth of their involvement with educating the public on issues related to

concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in 2011 (*See* the LWVIL position on Large-Scale Livestock Facilities), the Jo Daviess County League spearheaded a watershed planning effort in the county, convening a committee representing a cross-section of stakeholders, including agricultural interests. This laid the groundwork for their collaboration with Leagues from Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to create the Upper Mississippi River Region (UMRR) ILO in 2015. Agricultural practices in the Upper Mississippi River Region have contributed significantly to the high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen that created the Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone. USEPA has required each of the 12 states bordering the Mississippi to develop strategies to substantially reduce the

loss of these nutrients by 2025. The UMRR ILO will engage in watershed literacy initiatives, monitor state, regional, and federal proposals affecting the region's interests, as well as coordinate advocacy efforts across state lines and congressional districts focusing on regional natural resource issues, beginning with reducing the loss of nutrients.

LWVIL Actions 2015-17

The work of the Upper Mississippi River Region (UMRR) InterLeague Organization has been the major focus on the sustainable water front since UMRR's launch in October 2015. An initiative begun by the Jo Daviess County League, UMRR has 60+ Leagues from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin supporting efforts to reduce nutrients (nitrogen & phosphorus) going into our waterways. Those nutrients in our tributaries that feed the Mississippi River have created the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Through a partnership with Rotary International, and with funding from other non-profit organizations, UMRR is engaging in watershed education throughout the region. It joins its sister organization, LWV Lake Michigan Region, in this mission.

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS

Illinois Land Use Policies

1972, 1973, 1974

Revised in 1975, 1977, 1997, and 1999

Comprehensive Land Use Policy

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports:

- Development of a comprehensive land use policy for Illinois that provides for orderly growth while preserving the environment,

conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space and protection of prime agricultural land from lesser uses and intensive development.

- The League believes the State should establish the long-range goals of a comprehensive land use policy and that the State should identify, plan for, and have the final authority over all key and critical areas in the state. The State should develop standards and broad guidelines for land use, but local governments should make purely local decisions. The State should assist local governments with professional

help and should encourage and facilitate intergovernmental cooperation.

- A state agency with adequate staff and funding should be responsible for forming and implementing land use decisions. Opportunities for citizen participation should be available at every stage of land use planning.
- Conservation of natural resources must be the established policy of the state, and citizens should be made aware of the role they can play in conservation. Comprehensive land use planning and citizen education are the major thrusts to harmonize growth and the preservation of resources.
- The League supports regional planning and continuous mandatory funding for regional planning agencies from local, state and federal resources (see also LWVUS Natural Resources position).

Background

The study of land use issues in Illinois began in 1971, continued through 1974, and ran concurrently with a 1972 national study. While the broad goals of each consensus are nearly identical, the state positions are more specific and enhance the national position.

Development Impact Fees

1997

LWVIL Position:

The League supports:

- legislation at the state level regarding development impact fees. It is appropriate for such legislation to address fees for capital expenditures for schools, libraries, parks/open space, transportation, utilities and emergency services.
- Such legislation should be enabling only, and not directive. Only municipalities and counties should have the authority to assess development impact fees, and state guidelines should be adaptable to home rule and non-home rule communities. The test for validity of impact fees in Illinois

should be “rational nexus” and not “specifically and uniquely attributable.”

- Enabling legislation should strive to effect some standardization of impact fee programs statewide, with flexibility for each to be designed to meet local needs.

Background:

Delegates to the 1997 LWVIL Convention adopted by concurrence a position on development impact fees, developed and presented by the LWV of the Barrington Area. This League’s local study of impact fees in 1990 revealed that only enabling legislation for road impact fees existed at the state level. Communities enacting impact fees ordinances for other capital projects were doing so without state legislative guidelines, perhaps risking legal challenges. Legislation to set standards for the use of impact fees is viewed as a benefit to local governments as they deal with development and its associated costs.

Recent LWVIL Action

- In 2002 and 2003, LWVIL partnered with the **Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission’s** comprehensive land use planning process for the 2030 plan and was represented at planning sessions held by **Metropolis 2020**.
- LWVIL testified at the recertification hearing to keep the **Chicago Area Transportation Study (CATS)** as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Chicagoland area. LWVIL also testified for the Illinois Growth Task Force and approved findings of the Committee.
- LWVIL testified before a Senate committee, sent out action alerts and worked with coalition partners for **Tollway reform**.
- In 2008, LWVIL monitored Blagojevich administration budget cuts affecting open spaces and natural areas protections and causing **state parks and historic sites**

- closures.** The Legislature's action and support from Gov. Quinn in 2009 restored some funding and reopened state parks.
- Supported statewide land acquisition programs to **Illinois' natural heritage**.
 - Opposed a bill to divert State revenue to private developers to build on a 100 year floodplain passed through the legislature in 2009. The League urged Gov. Quinn to veto the bill and he subsequently issued an amendatory veto.

Large-Scale Livestock Facilities

1999

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports strict regulations of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and/or county levels to include:

- 1) Appropriate statewide environmental controls:
 - a) implement siting criteria to protect water sensitive areas;
 - b) require that all large-scale livestock facilities management plans be submitted to the appropriate agency and be available to the public;
 - c) require that rates of the most potentially damaging components (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, heavy metals) be used as parameters for livestock waste application on crops to minimize land and water pollution;
 - d) require set back distances from bodies of water, wells for human consumption and residences necessary to protect public health;
 - e) require owners to provide bonding, insurance indemnity funds or other financial assurances to ensure that the owners, not the taxpayers, pay for the cost of cleanups from spills or closing of facilities;
 - f) require inspections more frequently than once per year to ensure

- g) extend current rules for lagoons to all types of waste handling facilities;
 - h) not distinguish between farm and non-farm residences in setback distances from facilities.
- 2) Public hearing to give notice of the intention to site a facility, determine compliance with state, regional and/or local criteria, and determine compliance with state environmental criteria.
 - 3) Regional and/or county control of siting.

Background and League Action

1999 LWVIL Convention delegates adopted by concurrence a position on large-scale livestock facilities developed by the Jackson County League. Local Leagues held informational and roundtable discussions on the environmental and economic impacts of increased livestock production in Illinois. Large-scale livestock facilities regulations were negotiated and passed by the General Assembly as part of the Livestock Management Facilities Act.

2005: LWVIL was concerned that the Illinois Livestock Development Initiative, an outcome of a Livestock Summit convened by the governor, would streamline environmental controls, change setback requirements, and limit public participation relating to the siting and operations of such facilities in the state.

2008-2011: Mega Dairy Proposal for Jo Daviess County: A new dairy that would have been the largest such farming operation in the state, was proposed for northwestern Illinois. The area's karst geology, opponents claimed, is such that a manure pond leak could quickly contaminate local groundwater and spills could contaminate surface water. Although the Jo Daviess County Board rejected the proposal and the Galena City Council called for a county moratorium on large Concentrated Animal Feeding

Operations (CAFOs), the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) approved the permit. A series of lawsuits ensued while animosity between dairy proponents and opponents grew. The courts eventually ruled in the dairy's favor, but the owners decided to move elsewhere, leaving the community divided.

The Jo Daviess County LWV decided to act both to become better informed on the issue and to help rebuild community.. A day-long public seminar was held in June 2011. The seminar addressed the history and changing economics of the dairy industry, as well as county, state & federal agricultural siting frameworks, and state regulations of these facilities. A 4-disc CD set was made of this event, and the Jo Daviess League continued to interview and videotape both proponents and opponents of the proposed dairy to increase their own knowledge of the complex economic, environmental and social issues presented by such enterprises. It has participated in discussions with other stakeholders regarding the possible use of methane digester technology for manure treatment.

2012-Present: LWVIL joined a coalition of environmental & industry groups to support a negotiated bill establishing permit fees for CAFOs required to have a NPDES discharge permit. An April 2012 TFA urged League members to ask their legislators for support. The bill became law.

Contemporaneous with the Jo Daviess County mega-dairy proposal, citizen opponents petitioned USEPA to withdraw Illinois EPA's approval to administer the Clean Water Act citing IEPA's failure to update NPDES permitting requirements for CAFOs, among other things. Finding Illinois EPA's program deficient, USEPA required Illinois to adopt such rules and take other relevant actions to enhance environmental protection . In 2012, Illinois EPA proposed

such rules to the Illinois Pollution Control Board (IPCB) and this rulemaking (R2012-023 and 023A) continued through 2015. The IPCB adopted new regulations in 2014 and concluded rulemaking on all aspects in June 2015 following IPCB's reconsideration of its proposal regarding creation of a CAFO inventory. League members attended public hearings and LWVIL submitted multiple written comments at various stages in this process.

Pesticides

1991

LWVIL Position:

- The League supports the reduction of exposure to all pesticides and urges the use of non-toxic alternatives.
- Governmental bodies should encourage a reduction in pesticide use through the promotion of management programs such as integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture and non-toxic control techniques.

Background

Adopted at 1991 LWVIL Convention, based on a 1990 Lake Michigan LWV position.

Recent LWVIL Action

January 1, 2008, the Structural Pest Control Act expired after legislation to extend a sunset provision in the Act did not pass. LWVIL supported Legislation to extend the Act to December 31, 2009; it passed both the Illinois House and Senate, one of the few environmental legislative successes of the Spring 2008 session.

2009: Legislation to extend the repeal date of the Structural Pest Control Act to 2019 did not pass.

League supported successful legislation regulating the pesticide application in schools

and childcare centers and recommending a Pesticide-Free Turf Care program.

Water-Great Lakes Ecosystem

2013

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin.

I. Protective Measures

To achieve protection and improvement of this valuable, international resource, the League of Women Voters of Illinois supports efforts to:

- Limit uses of "fragile," historical, cultural and scenic shoreline areas.
- Preserve wild and pristine areas within the watershed, with no new development in these special habitats without adherence to strict criteria as prescribed by federal, state, or local governments.
- Provide for appropriate recreational opportunities in and public access to sensitive areas without destruction or harm to the ecosystem.
- Protect the quality of the air and waters of the ecosystem by strict adherence to agricultural, industrial, residential, environmental, and commercial zoning regulations that prohibit the introduction of toxic or polluting discharges or detrimental land use techniques within the Basin.
- Protect the remaining dune formations. Enforce strict regulations of sand dune mining or development on the dunes.
- Strengthen upstream land management to eliminate sources of siltation and pollution.

- Control the invasion and spread of non-native aquatic and terrestrial nuisance species.

II. Threats to the Ecosystem

The League of Women Voters of Illinois opposes the following activities as they can lead to the degradation of the special natural resources of the Great Lakes Ecosystem: •

Inefficient or excessive water uses. Proposals for new or increased withdrawals within the Basin, e.g. for agricultural or municipal uses, should be carefully evaluated before being permitted. Withdrawals should be regularly monitored for potential or actual damage to the ecosystem.

- Destruction of marshes and other wetlands throughout the watershed. Mitigation should be accepted only as a last resort. Mitigation proposals should be rigorously evaluated and projects should be strictly monitored to assure no net loss to the ecosystem.
- New or increased diversions or transfers by any means of Great Lakes waters and adjacent ground waters to a place outside the Basin. Projects already in place should be carefully monitored and restricted if there is evidence of damage to the ecosystem.
- Dredging and filling of river inlets, harbors, lakes or wetlands except for tightly-controlled, non-degrading and non-repetitive activities.
- Discharge to air or water of toxic pollutants and other material from industrial, agricultural, residential or commercial operations that may damage the ecosystem in violation of laws and ordinances.

III. Public Participation

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports informed and responsible action on behalf of the preservation of the Great Lakes Ecosystem. Relevant information should be readily available to the public. Opportunities for public input should be timely, accessible, convenient and well advertised.

IV. Role of Government

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports:

- Coordination of functions among various governmental agencies charged with protecting the Great Lakes and elimination of unnecessary overlap.
- Use of area-wide coordinated management plans and techniques in the solving of Great Lakes Ecosystem problems.
- Participation by all affected governments in the Basin in review and decision-making on Great Lakes agreements and projects, facilitated in open meetings and hearings.
- Strengthening of existing mechanisms for intergovernmental discussions and decision-making.
- Separation of responsibility for submitting recommendations for governmental projects from issuing permits for such projects.
- Monitoring and enforcement of treaties, ordinances, laws and master plans.

V. Research Priorities

The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that research on Great Lakes issues should focus on:

- Effective, non-toxic control and removal of invasive aquatic and terrestrial species.
- Restoration of health to the overall resource.
- Survival of native aquatic and terrestrial species and their nutrient sources.
- Continual testing of Great Lakes water quality for impact from the following: pesticides and fertilizers, resistant bacteria, persistent pharmaceuticals and other chemicals.
- Evaluation of water accountability systems, groundwater monitoring and water use planning and conservation efforts throughout the Basin

LWVIL Action:

The U.S.S. Badger, a ferry running between Wisconsin and Michigan, was subject to a federal Consent Decree requiring that it cease its practice of dumping untreated coal ash into

Lake Michigan. In April, 2012, LWVIL submitted comments to the Assistant Attorney General asking for a strengthened Decree, including a reduction in the time allowed for compliance. Earlier, LWVIL submitted letters to the editor opposing the toxic pollution.

Concerned about potential leaks from oil pipelines that run adjacent to Lake Michigan, LWVIL joined partners in 2013 in requesting a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the tar sands pipelines.

Invasive species coming into U.S. waters are of great concern. The League is monitoring efforts to prevent an Asian Carp invasion into Lake Michigan and to control the introduction and spread of non-indigenous species from ships discharging ballast water. In February, 2014, LWVIL submitted comments to the US Army Corps of Engineers on the Great Lakes-Mississippi River Interbasin Study supporting the separation of the watersheds to prevent the transfer of nonnative species, and urging better public outreach to Illinois citizens on these matters.

Working with LWV Lake Michigan Region and the Healing Our Waters Coalition, LWVIL continues to support implementation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and continued funding of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Illinois League members have traveled to Washington DC for Great Lakes Lobby Day annually to express the League's support for robust federal funding of projects benefitting the lakes, including removal of toxic sediment, addressing invasive species, and restoration of habitat. Most recently, in July, 2015, LWVIL joined our coalition partners in sending a letter to the Office of Management and the Budget requesting continued GLRI funding.

LWVILEF carried out clean water education projects, often working with local Leagues.

Through the 2016 “Rooting for Clean Water” program funded by an Illinois Coastal Management Grant, materials on the role of native plants in helping to clean water were created. Approximately 1000 flyers and 100 bumper stickers were distributed to local Leagues, members, and others along the Lake Michigan coast. A very successful workshop was held in August, 2016 with a bus tour of a Wilmette prairie and several home landscapes to learn how to use native plants. Hundreds of additional materials provided by the LWV Lake Michigan Region, our collaborator in this project, were distributed to and through Illinois Leagues outside of the coastal area. A powerpoint presentation remains available to garden clubs and other groups that would like to learn about native plants’ role as nature’s water treatment plants.

The LWVILEF acquired two watershed demonstration models with funding through a second IL Department of Natural Resources grant. Seventeen volunteers were trained to use the models to demonstrate watershed dynamics and sources of water pollution. The model has been and will continue to be used for public outreach and community events throughout 2017.

LWVIL has worked toward banning coal tar sealants, a source of water pollution. Organic compounds in these sealants are harmful to human, animal, and aquatic ecosystem health. The League supported legislation that would ban these substances statewide for the past three years. Local Leagues in homerule municipalities are supporting local bans and this work is ongoing. Amendment 2 to HB 2958 would allow non-homerule communities (most with fewer than 25,000 population) to pass bans as well. Congratulations are due to the LWV of Wilmette for successfully advocating for its Village ban of coal tar sealants.

2015-17

Asked LWVUS to sign on to a letter requesting continued Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding in July, 2015

- Issued a TFA requesting calls to Senator Kirk to express disappointment with his co-sponsorship of a bill that would weaken the Clean Water Act in November, 2015.
- Submitted comments on the proposed Total Maximum Daily Load standards for Mercury and PCBs in Lake Michigan Nearshore Waters to the Illinois EPA in February, 2016. Very significant reductions of both pollutants are required to meet federal water quality standards. League comments emphasized that a strong implementation plan is needed, and that the Waukegan Generating Station and coal-fired power plants in neighboring states create air pollution that must also be addressed to achieve healthier water.
- Asked local Leagues to request that their state legislators co-sponsor a bill banning coal tar sealants in 2016 Legislative Interviews. Several Leagues reported that their legislators asked for more information. LWVIL President Mary Kubasak responded directly with follow-up letters to the legislators.
- Testified on behalf of the Cook County League in favor of an Ordinance creating a safe Pharmaceutical Disposal program for the county. An amended version passed on October 26, 2016.

Two federal issues commanded attention in 2017. The first was budgetary: LWVIL advocated for maintaining the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

program at \$300 million, the same level it had been funded at in recent years. The administration eliminated the program in its proposed budget. After outcry from League members and many others in the region, full funding was restored in the budget by and was approved by the House and the Senate appropriation committees. The federal budget process continues at the time of submission of this report. We also supported adequate and increased funding for other federal water infrastructure programs.

The rescission and recodification of the Waters of the U.S. Rule under the Clean Water Act was the second federal water issue that LWWIL addressed. The 2015 rule, supported by the League, clarified which waters are subject to Clean Water Act regulations. The administration seeks to extend the date the rule goes into effect by two years so it will have more time to consider a replacement rule. The League opposed the rescission of the current rule.

Legislative Activity:

- Issued a TFA in March supporting HB 2958, a Coal Tar Ban. In May, the proposed legislation was amended to allow non-home rule municipalities to adopt local bans on coal tar sealants. LWWIL sent out a second TFA supporting the amended bill, and also provided a template for a Letter to the Editor to local Leagues. The bill failed to pass for the third year.
- Issued a TFA supporting federal FY2018 GLRI funding at \$300

million. A Letter to the Editor template was sent to the local Leagues in April.

- Signed on to a letter in September initiated by the Healing Our Waters Coalition opposing the repeal of the Clean Water Rule.

Outlook

In 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released its study and tentative recommendation of how to prevent Asian carp and other invasive species from using the Illinois Sanitary and Ship Canal to spread between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River watersheds. The tentative plan is a multiprong approach that includes construction of a third electric barrier at the Brandon Road locks. The proposed completion of the project is in 2028. The LWW Lake Michigan Region submitted comments criticizing the plan as too little, too late, but recommending installation of the parts of the plan that can be implemented quickly as interim measures. The Army Corps is in the process of reviewing comments from the public and should issue a final plan by 2019.

The current administration in Washington continues to issue directives that negatively impact our water resources and to eliminate protective regulations at a rapid pace. Funding for the U.S. EPA and other agencies that administer water programs has been cut. The cuts at the federal level will likely result in reduced funding that is passed through to Illinois agencies that maintain and protect our lakes, rivers, streams, and groundwater.

●*Upper Mississippi River Region (UMRR)*
ILO (2015)

Many of the goals and priorities of the Great Lakes Basin goals are echoed by the newly created UMRR ILO. See the Agriculture Position for a description.

LWVUS SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Positions and
Major Action by the Illinois League
Complete LWVUS Positions in Impact on Issues.

See LWVUS *Impact on Issues* for the complete text and background on each LWVUS issue.

LWVUS Position:

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

Equality of Opportunity

1969, 1972, 1980, 1989, 2010

LWVUS Position:

LWVUS believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their age, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.

Education

Integration: The LWVUS is committed to racial integration of schools as a necessary condition for equal access to education.

Quality Education: Although the 1974-76 LWVUS Program included “equal access...to quality education,” and believes the two are inseparable, the LWVUS did not determine a common League definition that could serve as a basis for nationwide education. Thus, when the definition of quality is a key factor in a

state or local community, a local or state League has had to conduct its own study.

Tuition Tax Credits: Since 1978 LWVUS has opposed tax credits for families of children attending private elementary and secondary schools based on League support for equal access to education and support for desegregation to promote equal access.

Federal Programs

The League has supported many federal education programs including some to meet special educational needs of the poor and minorities and others to give women and minorities equal educational opportunities. The League worked for Title IX passage to prohibit sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal aid and has since worked to prevent Title IX from being scaled back.

Education Financing: Most action on school financing equity takes place at the state level where school financing laws are made. See LWVIL Schools and Fiscal Policy positions pages for Illinois action.

LWVIL Action:

LWVIL opposes both state and federal tuition tax credits and school voucher proposals. In

1999 LWVIL filed an unsuccessful Federal Court suit to block implementation of the 1999 Tuition Tax Credit law.

Employment

LWVUS has supported federal job training programs and is on record as being in favor of a full employment policy. See LWVUS Impact on Issues for further details and criteria.

LWVIL Action:

Illinois Leagues have monitored Job Training Partnership Act programs. LWVIL has supported state legislation to strengthen employment protections available under federal civil rights laws. LWVIL continues to support job set-asides in government programs and strategies to move Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients into long-term employment in jobs that place them above the federal poverty line. League opposes any reduction for education and training in the proposed TANF rules. LWVIL works with Chicago Jobs Council and Illinois Works for the Future on employment and other workforce initiatives.

LWVIL has supported an improved workforce development system that aids disadvantaged job seekers and low income workers throughout the state, including expanded educational opportunities after high school graduation. There is a large need for work-based learning policies to help the low skilled population of disadvantaged youth and adults. African Americans and Latinos are twice as likely to be poor as non-Hispanic whites according to the Coalition on Human Needs in Washington D.C. There has been an increase in poverty for adults age 65 yrs. and older.

Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action; Pay Equity

The League has strongly supported affirmative action programs for minorities and women through legislative and regulatory advocacy as well as litigation. League work on pay equity (equal pay for jobs of comparable worth) stemmed from member concern over the feminization of poverty.

LWVIL Action:

The League has supported legislation that based state employee pay scales on comparable worth and legislation strengthening civil rights at both the state and federal levels. From 1995-97, LWVIL worked with the Coalition for Equal Opportunity to protect the gains made by women and minorities in the workplace, business and education. LWVIL testified before an Illinois Senate subcommittee, supported Federal regulatory changes to strengthen enforcement, and alerted Leagues to contact targeted representatives. The League sent a letter to the Illinois House Labor Committee supporting the Equal Pay Act of 2003, which prohibits gender-based pay discrimination.

LWVIL action:

2015-17 In 2016 women earned 80.5% of men's earnings which was up from 79.6% in 2015. The League continues to work on pay **equality for women**. According to National Women's Law Center 2014 Census Poverty Data, the poverty rate among women was 14.7% while the rate for adult men was 10.9%. The poverty rate for women 65 years and older was 12.1% compared to 7.4% for men. More than 2/3 of elderly poor are women. In addition, more than 1/2 of poor children lived in female-headed families League continues to advocate for programs such as EITC and Child Tax Credit, improve pathways to good education and careers for all. In addition most renters need to earn \$18.78 per hour in order to pay the rent for a two bedroom apartment.

Fair Housing

LWVUS supports programs and policies that will provide equal housing access and curb discrimination using a set of criteria listed in the full position statement.

LWVIL Action:

Leagues have supported fair housing by monitoring anti-red-lining legislation and regulation of mortgage bankers. LWVIL monitored compliance with the 1988 Federal Fair Housing Act Amendments, which prohibit housing discrimination against the physically and mentally disabled. League supported proposed legislation to amend the Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination against housing voucher holders, the disabled and others with legal sources of income in their right to apply for housing.

Equal Rights

LWVUS Position:

Support equal rights for all regardless of sex and action to bring laws into compliance with the Equal Rights Amendment.

LWVIL action:

LWVIL made a tremendous commitment to passing the Equal Right Amendment (ERA) in Illinois, including efforts to change the General Assembly's 3/5 ratification rule to a simple majority. The League has worked to bring Illinois laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA, including support of gender neutral insurance practices and re-establishing the State Commission on the Status of Women, on which members sat on various working groups.

In 2002, LWVIL again worked with an ERA Illinois coalition for ratification to the U.S. Constitution in the Illinois Legislature. The amendment passed the Illinois House in Spring 2003. Local League members extensively lobbied their senators, especially in targeted districts throughout 2003 and

2004. However, ERA passage failed in the 93rd Illinois General Assembly.

Again in 2014, LWVIL worked with an ERA coalition for ratification in the Illinois General Assembly. In 2014, the Illinois Senate ratified the ERA, but the Illinois House never had a floor vote on ERA either in the May regular session or in the November veto session. A 3/5 majority would have been required for ratification in May and in November.

2015-17

For a number of years, LWVIL has been part of a coalition supporting ratification of the ERA in the Illinois General Assembly.

In May 2014, the Illinois Senate ratified the ERA by the required 3/5 majority. However, no vote was taken in 2014 in the Illinois House because it was uncertain whether there was a 3/5 majority House support.

In February 2017, Illinois Senator Heather Steans, as the lead Senate ERA sponsor, introduced the ERA as SJRCA0004 for ratification. It was adopted by the Illinois Senate Executive Committee, but was never scheduled for a Senate floor vote. Without a Senate vote, the ERA never came to the Illinois House for consideration.

In an attempt to move the ERA out of the Senate and into the House with a positive 3/5 majority House vote, LWVIL in 2017 worked in coalition with a number of organizations, initiated a number of TFAs and contacted key targeted legislators.

LWVIL will continue to work toward passage of SJRCA0004 in 2018 which is the state of Illinois' bicentennial year celebration.

Fiscal Policy

1984, 1985 and 1986

LWVUS Position:

Support adequate, 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; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

The LWVUS Fiscal Policy Position also addresses **Tax Policy**, the **Federal Deficit** and **Funding of Entitlements**.

LWVIL Action:

In 1993, the LWVIL and several local Leagues joined the newly established League of Women Voters Federal Budget Network, which evolved into the Grassroots Lobby Corps. In 2001, LWVUS and LWVIL joined the First Things First Coalition in advocating that the federal government put "first things first" and spend revenues on necessary government programs that the League supports rather than cut taxes. The League testified at a rally on April 11, 2001 and participated in a Grassroots lobbying effort opposing the tax cuts (see LWVIL State Fiscal Policies position).

Health Care

1993

LWVUS Position:

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.

The full position includes: Goals, Basic Level of Quality Care, Financing and Administration, Taxes, Cost Control Methods, and Allocation of Resources to Individuals.

LWVIL Action:

LWVIL has supported the following legislative initiatives.

- Medical assistance for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Medicaid funding for prenatal care, nursing women, children under 6
- Nurse practitioners and nurse midwives to serve eligible Medicaid patients
- Financial incentives to increase health care workers in underserved areas
- Women have option to select an obstetrician/gynecologist as primary health care provider in managed care plans

Locally, leagues urged their counties to provide health services for the indigent, access to and information on family planning and abortion services.

LWVIL worked with the Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC) to pass the **Health Care Justice Act** (2004), gave testimony to the Adequate Health Care Task Force at statewide hearings. The Task Force's final report with the recommendation for affordable, quality health care for all Illinois citizens was presented to the Governor and legislature in 2007. However, enabling legislation expired January 2009.

2009-2011

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) became law in March 2010 after a protracted, contentious, partisan process. LWVUS endorsed the bill to advance its position for universal access to care. LWVIL leagues advocated for the bill in coalition with the CBHC.

Consumer protection provisions of the ACA began within months, full implementation to

be phased in by 2020. Americans remain divided on the law and are unsure how the law will benefit them. The health insurance requirement for all citizens is under assault in federal courts.

The Illinois Governor's Health Reform Implementation Council was created to monitor and make recommendations for state implementation of the ACA. LWVIL testified at a Council hearing citing the pressing need for health insurance reform.

The Affordable Care Act calls on states to create a health insurance exchange by 2014. League supported SB 1729, **The Competitive Healthcare Marketplace Plan**, to set up infrastructure for a 2014 Exchange.

2011-2013

In June 2012 the Supreme Court ruled the ACA constitutional, although states were not required to expand the Medicaid provision. Furthermore, if a state does not choose to participate in expansion, the federal government cannot withdraw all Medicaid funding. In November, President Barack Obama was elected for a second term, a favorable outlook for the law. However, opposition continued: the House of Representatives voted over two dozen times to repeal the law. Polls showed that most Americans were uncertain how the ACA would affect them.

LWVIL and CBHC co-sponsored workshops for individual women and leaders of women's organizations throughout the state to speak out in support of the ACA.

Medicaid Expansion

Illinois, with 20 other states, chose to expand Medicaid coverage for those with incomes of 138% of federal poverty level or less. The

ACA funds 100% of Medicaid Expansion for 2014-16, phasing down to 90% by 2020. In Illinois an estimated 500,000 more citizens would have coverage.

LWVIL lobbied in support of Medicaid Expansion. PA980104 became law in 2013.

Health Insurance Marketplace (Exchange)

ACA State Health Insurance Exchanges are online, competitive marketplaces for consumers and small businesses to compare prices and shop for health insurance. If a state does not elect to implement an Exchange by 2014, the federal government will set up and manage it. Alternatively, states may choose to pursue a partnership exchange in which the state plays a role in the development and operation of the Exchange. As of April 23, 2013, 16 states and DC will set up state based exchanges.

LWVIL worked in coalition with CBHC to ensure an Illinois Exchange is consumer-based with independent governance and free from conflict of interest. It has been a protracted process. A last minute bill supported by the insurance industry became law in 2011, supplanting model legislation LWVIL and other advocates supported.

LWVIL testified at a hearing of the Bipartisan Legislative Study Group formed by the 2011 law, to advocate for a consumer-focused bill. Information and a TFA for a coalition bill was sent to LWV membership in the veto session; no action taken.

In June 2012 a TFA requested calls to the Governor to set up a Marketplace by Executive Order. However the Governor requested a federal-state partnership Marketplace for 2014, transitioning to a state based Marketplace in 2015. Enabling legislation, needed for the transition, was filed in the 2013 session. HB3227, supported by LWVIL, passed the Senate, but not called

in the House despite indications of more than sufficient votes to pass.

2013-2015

Affordable Care Act (ACA) Open Enrollment Health Insurance Marketplace

Initial October 2013 enrollment on Healthcare.gov, the federal website, was disastrous; technical issues were resolved by an industry team by year-end. Year two enrollment was greatly improved.

Second Enrollment Status @ 2/15/15:

Nationwide: 11.4 million signed up, renewed plans

Illinois: 347,300 enrolled in private plans, 78% eligible for subsidy, averaging \$210/month

575,000 enrolled in Medicaid, surpassing estimates

ACA Provisions in effect: Grand Total 20 million gain coverage nationwide including marketplaces, young adults through parents' plans, direct purchases through insurers, adults and children enrolled in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program. Consumer protections, as coverage of pre-existing conditions, enhanced preventive and women's health care.

ACA Legal Issues

In King v. Burwell LWVUS joined an amicus brief heard by the Supreme Court March 2015. The case challenged whether tax credit subsidies can be provided to applicants for health insurance through federally facilitated health exchanges or just to those using an exchange established directly by a state. If the Court blocked subsidies to states using the federal exchange, Illinois and 36 other states would have been impacted. On June 25

SCOTUS ruled 6-3 for tax subsidies to continue through both federal and state exchanges. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote for the majority, "Congress passed the ACA to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them."

State Health Insurance Exchange

(Marketplace) last ditch efforts to pass a bill for a state exchange failed in the 2014 veto session. With that, Illinois missed the application deadline for federal set up funds of \$300-500 million.

2015 House Resolution 253 Protect Illinois

Medicaid: Illinois joined Health Care coalition partners in support of resolution in response to Governor's proposed \$1.5 billion cut to Medicaid.

LWVIL Support for Navigators: witness slips were submitted in opposition to several bills that would have derailed the Navigator Program. Despite clear federal policies on all aspects of hiring, training and supervision of Navigators in the Illinois Partnership Marketplace, the bills set out redundant and expensive provisions designed to negatively impact 2015 enrollment. All bills remain in Rules.

2015-17

President Trump and Congressional Republicans vowed to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2017 as a first order of business.

The Urban Institute reported repeal of the ACA would mean an estimated 1.2 million people in Illinois would lose health insurance by 2019. Illinois has 3 million on Medicaid including 700,000 on ACA Expanded Medicaid covering disabled, seniors, low-income adults and families with children, rural and children's hospitals. The prospect of

changes to Medicaid structure, as block grants, would put Illinois in a precarious position given the dire financial status. Moderate-income families in the ACA Marketplace would risk losing cost sharing subsidies, an average deduction of 61%.

2017 Bills to Repeal ACA

1) House American Health Care Act:

Introduced 3/20; 5/4 Passed as Amended

217- 213; 13 Republicans opposed

Provisions: eliminates ACA individual and employer mandates, lowers deficit by cutting Medicaid, would result in 24 million people eventually losing coverage, increases premiums for older adults, women and persons with pre-existing conditions, guts essential health benefits as maternity care, prescription drugs and mental health care.

2) Senate Better Care Reconciliation Act

2017: Failed to pass 7/28 49-51 Senators

Collins, Murkowski, McCain opposed

LWVVUS Statement called the bill worse than the house version and “not worthy of this great nation. This a nasty bill that will hurt millions of Americans.” It essentially defunds Medicaid, gives tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals and large corporations.

3) Senate Graham/Cassidy Amendment

introduced 9/13 failed to come to vote

Provisions: Repeals the structure and architecture of the ACA and replaces it with a block grant given annually to the states.

League Activity 2017

LWVIL joined Protect Our Care Illinois (PoCIL), a Coalition of advocacy and social service groups to lobby for “no repeal of ACA without adequate replacement.” Letters

were sent to Leagues in Congressional Districts with representatives supporting repeal. Members were asked to engage with them during the February recess through personal meetings, rallies and social media.

Leagues organized Q and A Public Forums

in the 14th District (Hultgren) and 16th (Kinzinger), two of seven IL representatives who supported straight repeal of the ACA. Rep. Roskam (6th District) refused to participate in a public meeting organized by Leagues in his District.

May

TFA : Contact targeted U.S. Representatives to commit to a bill that is an acceptable and genuine replacement for ACA. Also call Governor Rauner asking him to reinforce with IL Congressional Delegation the dire effects that a repeal without adequate replacement would have on Illinois financial status.

June

TFA: Contact Governor to send a strong message to members of U.S. Congress, particularly the Illinois delegation, to refrain from voting for cuts to Medicaid benefits.

Leaders Update: Advocacy information and strategies for local league on potential Senate bill.

Testimony: House Appropriations Human Services Committee 6/20

Margaret O’Hara, LWVIL Health Care Issue Specialist, testified on a panel of nurses in support of HR 445 opposing the American Health Care Act. She cited experience with the financial devastation and lack of appropriate care suffered by patients with

preexisting conditions and inadequate insurance. The panel called out the Governor on no cuts to Medicaid.

July

TFA: Contact Governor Rauner to publicly oppose cuts to Medicaid in any legislation to repeal, replace or modify ACA.

Sign on to organizational letter to Governor to oppose ACA repeal.

August

Drive For Our Lives national bus tour stop in Chicago for Press Conference and Rally by Health Coalition partners.

September

TFA: Contact Governor to oppose Graham-Cassidy proposal.

Sign on to organizational letter to Illinois Congressional Delegation to renew CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) that covers 325,000 IL children; expires 9/30.

October

Sign on to letter to letter to Illinois Congressional Delegation to renew CHIP and Maternal Infant Home Visiting Program; added to Facebook and Twitter.

Sign on to letter to Medicare and Medical Services opposing ACA healthcare.gov weekend shutdowns for maintenance and shortened enrollment period.

For information on Public Policy and LWVIL actions on Reproductive Choices, including Affordable Care Act provisions, see LWVUS Citizen Rights positions.

Immigration

2008

LWVUS Position:

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.

June 27, 2013 -- A comprehensive immigration reform bill (S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act), which includes a path to citizenship for the over 11million undocumented immigrants in the US, passed the U.S. Senate in a strong bipartisan vote. Now the White House is putting pressure on the House of Representatives to take on comprehensive immigration reform that would include a similar path to citizenship. Preferably, they would vote on the Senate bill, but House Speaker Boehner has refused to bring that bill to the House floor. The House, instead, is trying to put together its own immigration reform in various bills that emphasize border control and temporary work visas. LWVUS supports comprehensive immigration reform.

See the LWVIL Immigration position.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

1989; based on 1971-88 positions

LWVUS Position:

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families including:

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.

Transportation: Support for energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems to afford better access to housing and jobs; continued examination of transportation policies in light of these goals.

LWVIL Action on Housing Supply:

LWVIL has worked through the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission to encourage affordable housing opportunities in conjunction with job opportunities. Working with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Housing Action Illinois, LWVIL supported legislation creating a flexible pool of funding for local communities use to prevent family homelessness. The League supports programs to prevent homeowners from losing their homes through mortgage foreclosure. In conjunction with the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Housing Action Illinois and the Housing Illinois Roundtable, LWVIL supported the Affordable Housing Planning and Appeal Act of 2004 as well as an amendment to the Act in 2005. League supported the Rental Subsidy Support Program legislation that passed in 2005. League also supported increased appropriations for homelessness prevention as part of the "It Takes a Home to Raise a Child" campaign of the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless that the League endorsed in 1999. In addition to the "It Takes a Home to Raise a Child" project, at that time the League also backed legislation to prevent foreclosures. League has worked with Housing Action Illinois in establishing affordable housing action coalitions around the State. Presently there are two such Coalitions, DuPage

Housing Action Coalition and Kane County Housing Action Coalition.

Illinois Leagues have worked for an increased supply of low and moderate income housing through litigation, lobbying, participating on various advisory commissions to monitor Community Development Block Grants, monitoring housing authorities and by working with zoning boards. Leagues have worked in coalitions to increase housing for the homeless. (See LWVIL Land Use position.)

LWVIL Action on Support Services:

In response to a movement in Congress to eliminate or severely scale back the **federal legal services program**, LWVIL joined the Illinois Committee to Save Legal Services in the summer of 1995.

LWVIL has monitored state planning for use of federal block grants, including organizing statewide hearings. Leagues have provided support and local education on legislation relating to access to public facilities and transportation for the handicapped and published directories of facilities. LWVIL supported legislation increasing legal remedies for battered spouses, and local Leagues have been involved in establishing and funding domestic violence shelters.

LWVIL Action on Transportation: LWVIL supports improved mass transportation in Illinois by calling for adequate funding and effective regional planning with such agencies as the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). LWVIL supports legislation providing up to twelve months of transitional transportation assistance to former TANF recipients no longer eligible due to increased income (see LWVIL Land Use position.).

Child Care

1988

based on positions reached from 1969-88

LWVUS Position:

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it.

LWVIL Action: LWVIL joined Voices for Illinois Children and others advocating for legislation to increase families' options for childcare. The League supports childcare subsidies to income eligible, but non-TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) families. LWVIL has supported initiatives which enhance the quality of child care, as well as legislation to increase the supply of child care providers and to require state agencies to offer flexible work schedules in order to reduce employees' child care needs. Local Leagues have worked for an increased supply of childcare by producing local directories, surveying their communities and working for after-school day care programs (see LWVIL Children's Services position).

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

1994

LWVUS Position:

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

LWVIL action:

LWVIL has participated in advocacy initiatives of Voices for Illinois Children through Voices Leadership Committee, an effort to organize action by Senatorial districts throughout Illinois. These initiatives include early childhood education, childcare, intervention for young children with developmental delays or disabilities, home

visiting programs for at-risk families, mental health supports, health insurance and after school programs.

The League also worked in coalition with Action for Children, Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, Ounce of Prevention and Early Learning Illinois.

LWVIL continues to work with statewide policy organizations to expand budgetary support for initiatives to meet the needs of children at risk and their families. (See LWVIL Children's Services and Mental Health positions.)

Violence Prevention

1994

LWVUS Position:

Support violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support:

- public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence
- active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior
- allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence

LWVIL Action: (See LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk position, this section).

Gun Control

1990, amended in 1994, 1998

LWVUS Position:

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 Action: The LWVIL spearheaded the successful campaign to adopt a national gun control position on the floor of the 1990 LWVUS Convention. Illinois League members have continued their lobbying efforts to strengthen both national and state

laws. See LWVIL Gun Violence Prevention position.

Urban Policy

1979, revised 1989

LWVUS Position:

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

LWVIL Action: Advocacy and action in all of the areas of Social Policy and on federal and state fiscal issues, represent a significant commitment to improve the quality of life in Illinois cities.

Death Penalty

2006

LWVUS Position:

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the abolition of the death penalty.

Background: In 2003-2004, LWVIL conducted a nation-wide campaign to bring a concurrence with the Illinois position to the floor of the 2004 LWVUS Convention where it fell short of the 2/3 vote needed for

adoption. In 2006, LWVIL brought the issue back to Convention where concurrence was adopted by a wide margin.

See LWVIL position, Abolition of the Death Penalty.

Marital Law

At the 2001 Convention, delegates voted to drop the Marital Law position because it was considered obsolete and had never been used on the state level.

Sentencing Policy

2012

LWVUS Position:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

Background: At convention 2012, delegates voted to adopt a Sentencing Policy position by concurrence. The position is based on the Sentencing Policy of the LWV of the District of Columbia.

LWVIL SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS

Children's Services

1967, 1972, 1977, revised 1996

LWVIL Position:

The League believes that the State should play the leading role in meeting the needs of children and their families. This responsibility applies across systems of care regardless of age or legal status of the children.

Resources: The League supports a continuum of quality services that strengthens and preserves families and fosters healthy growth and development of children.

Family-focused, community-based systems of care that emphasize prevention and early intervention should have high priority. The supply of affordable, quality child care should be expanded, with priority given to those in greatest economic need. For children whose needs cannot be met at home, foster homes, group homes, small residential treatment and correctional facilities should be available. Transitional and aftercare programs are essential parts of the continuum of care. Regardless of where children are being served, education is essential.

Shelter care and other services suited to their needs should be available to children whose

cases are pending. Detention should be reserved for delinquent children who meet professional screening criteria and provided separately from adult programs.

The League supports a juvenile court system that provides opportunities for effective protection, treatment and rehabilitation; meets the individual needs of children and their families; and protects the rights of all affected parties. The court's effectiveness depends on several factors: judicial leadership, personnel with special training in juvenile matters, support services that allow judges to make informed decisions, probation services responsive to the special needs of children, courtroom procedures that reduce unnecessary delays, a wide range of available interventions, and an effective citizen presence. The League opposes the automatic transfer of children to the criminal court and believes that a juvenile court judge should determine whether a case is considered in the juvenile court or the criminal court. The League opposes the death penalty for offenses committed by children.

Administration: The State should have the primary role in funding to ensure that quality services are equitably available to children and families throughout the state. In order to protect funding and visibility, the child welfare agency should be separate from other human service agencies. The Governor's office should provide leadership to ensure that state agencies do the following:

- Communicate and cooperate with each other to provide coordinated services, clear guidelines for responsibility and information to the public about the availability of services;
- Develop long range plans which include coordination of local service delivery, provide for citizen input and review, and encourage local initiatives;
- Establish family-focused, community-based systems of care;
- Set and enforce program and personnel standards consistent with national accreditation standards;

- Encourage the recruitment, retention and training of sufficient numbers of qualified staff at all levels;
- Ensure that agencies are directed and staffed by qualified personnel regardless of political affiliation; and
- Evaluate programs and search for new methods to improve services.

Background

The current position was approved at Interim Council in 1996 and ratified by local Leagues following review by a statewide committee. It rewords the 1977 position, incorporates recommendations of the Illinois Juvenile Court Watching Project, and adds a statement opposing the death penalty for children.

LWVIL Action prior to 2009

- Opposed an attempt to amend the Illinois Constitution in a way that would weaken laws that protect children.
- Celebrated the 1999 centennial celebration of the juvenile court. Julia Lathrop, second president of the LWVIL, was one of its founders.
- Spearheaded legislation authorizing **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** to advocate in court on behalf of the child. The first CASA program established in Illinois, CASA of Cook County, began in 1986.
- Took an active role in rewriting the **Juvenile Court Act of 1987**.
- Strengthened the **rights of minors** by working to raise the age of original juvenile court jurisdiction, protect the confidentiality of records and require legal counsel during interrogation by law enforcement.
- Supported measures that call for an **individual review by the juvenile court** before transferring a case to the criminal court or applying provisions of the Sex Offender

Registration Act. Continued to oppose automatic transfer.

- Encouraged the development of alternatives to **detention**; opposed detention of non-delinquent children; opposed detention of juveniles in adult facilities; and participated in efforts to revise the County Juvenile Detention Standards.
- Advocated for the creation (in 2004) and subsequent expansion of **Redeploy Illinois**, a program that enables counties to develop community-based sanctions and services for juvenile offenders who would otherwise be incarcerated.
- Acted to **separate the Juvenile Division from the Department of Corrections** and create the Department of Juvenile Justice in 2006.

2009-2011

- LWVIL testified in support of retaining the **independence of the Department of Juvenile Justice** in response to the Governor's executive order calling for a study of a merger between the DJJ and the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Attended the 100th birthday celebration of the **Institute for Juvenile Research**, the first child guidance clinic in the country. The IJR grew out of the leadership of Julia Lathrop, second president of the LWVIL and co-founder of the Juvenile Court Act.
- Supported SB 2725 [PA 95-1031], a measure that treats **17 year olds as misdemeanants instead of felons**.
- Supported SB 1013 [PA 95-1050] making **Redeploy Illinois** a permanent program.
- Sent written testimony to the committee on SB 1725 **opposing the setting of six-month maximum terms for parole**. SB 1725 [PA96-0853]. was amended in GA

and, following the acceptance of an amendatory veto, was adopted.

2011-2013

A TFA was sent, supporting HB 2404 (PA 98-0061) Youths under 18 who commit non-violent felonies will be tried in juvenile court not adult court.

2013-2015

The LWVIL is one of approximately 200 organizations making up the membership of The Responsible Budget Coalition which is "concerned with the state budget and tax issues. It includes organizations that serve children, families, veterans, seniors and people with disabilities, education groups, early learning, K-12 and higher education, labor unions, faith based and civic organizations and many others".

LWVIL has worked throughout the state with legislative district visits as well as participating in rallies at State offices in Springfield and Chicago especially. There also has been considerable media coverage throughout the State. We have continued advocating with RBC for the three principles of RBC re the state's budget:

1. adequate revenue to support state priorities and make smart investments
2. no more cuts to vital programs and services
3. Fairness in raising revenue and making any cuts cause by failure to raise adequate revenue.

The needs of many individuals and families here in Illinois and around the Country continues to be immense. Housing that is affordable, child care help, income assistance and employment opportunities along with help in domestic violence issues and disability issues as well as available public transportation are among the greatest advocacy efforts of the League. With the Illinois budget/fiscal problems and

the passing of the 2016 budget by the State legislature being incomplete, we have seen unusually difficult situations for the providers around the State including needing to reduce the services and releasing workers from their jobs even as the need rises.

Juvenile Justice: Redeploy Illinois' budget was doubled in FY 2015 due to its success in diverting offenders from incarceration. Two juvenile prisons were closed in 2013; six remain open. The Illinois Supreme Court ruled in March, 2014, that inmates serving mandatory life sentences for murders committed as juveniles will receive new sentencing hearings, giving about 80 inmates the opportunity for reduced sentences or even freedom.

PA 98-0061(HB2404) provides that youths under 18 who commit non-violent felonies will now be tried in juvenile court. A TFA was sent supporting the bill. **PA 98-0558** expands juvenile justice system aftercare pilot program, promoting a more rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice reentry.**PA99-0258** ends automatic transfer to adult court for children under 15 and expands the discretion of juvenile court judges to make the transfer decision for children ages 16 and 17. Automatic transfer for some children 16 and 17 still is in place. **PA99-0254** provides that a child under 13 cannot be detained in a detention facility unless local youth service provider is unable to accept the child. **PA99-0268** ends the incarceration of children for misdemeanors and for status offences, and requires set terms for aftercare (parole) that cannot be longer than adult parole terms.

2015-17 These bills, passed in the balance of the 99th General Assembly and supported by the League accomplished these things: juveniles will now not be imprisoned for crimes that are not felonies or for certain non-violent felonies; mandatory probation terms have been reduced [**HB6291 (PA99-0879)**]; legal representation is required for children

up to age 15 during interrogation in murder and sex offenses, videotaping of juvenile interrogations has been expanded, and a modified version of the Miranda warning is required for children [**SB2370 (PA 99-0882)**]; more expungement opportunities are available [**HB6328 (PA 99-0881)**]; the Mental Health Opportunities for Youth Diversion Task Force is created and its report to the Governor and General Assembly is due within a year of its first meeting. The task force is to identify existing diversion programs, additional funding sources, the possible barriers to the implementation of evidence-based diversion models and to suggest solutions so that youth are diverted from the juvenile justice system into appropriate health care settings [**SB0320 (PA99-0894)**].

Other Important legislation: eliminates mandatory natural life sentences for youth under 18 at the time of the offense [**HB2471 (PA99-0069)**]; places limitations on expulsions, disciplinary removals to alternative schools, and out-of-school suspensions so that, with the use of other behavioral and disciplinary interventions, children can continue their education [**Senate Bill 100 (PA99-0456)**].

In October of 2016, the Illinois Supreme Court banned the shackling of juveniles during court proceedings unless the court finds reason to do so in a separate hearing

The League supported these reform bills passed during the 100th General Assembly and signed by the Governor:

HB2987 (PA100-0141) (ensures that Illinois youth who are or were homeless, in foster care, or court-involved have a chance to get the jobs and internships they are qualified for when a State agency has a job opening for an intern or student worker)

HB3165 (PA100-0157) (requires that training of juvenile personnel include restorative justice courses)

HB3817 (PA100-0285) (expands automatic expungement and strengthens confidentiality of juvenile records)

HB3903 (PA100-0204) (does not allow a place of detention or criminal processing on school grounds)

So far, about 35 of 80 Illinois inmates who received mandatory life-without-parole sentences for crimes committed as juveniles have been resentenced since the Supreme Court ruled that punishment unconstitutional. A small number have been released. Two inmates received natural life sentences in new hearings, but one of these had his punishment reduced to 60 years on appeal.

(See LWVIL Mental Health position and LWVIL Income Assistance positions as well as LWVUS Social Policy - Child Care and Early Intervention for Children at Risk positions.)

Criminal Justice

1972, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1989, revised 1995

LWVIL Position:

The League has positions on the following aspects of criminal justice.

Pretrial Release The League supports a bail bond system to ensure court appearances, but opposes a system of bondsmen who provide bail monies for fee. Financial ability should not be a criterion for pretrial release. Thorough evaluation and investigation should precede the use of release on recognizance (R.O.R.).

Courtroom Procedures The League supports improvements in courtroom procedures that

serve to minimize confusion and delay and increase fairness and efficiency. Trials should be prompt, with a limit on the time the accused can be held in jail prior to trial. Sufficient numbers of well-paid and well-trained judges, assistant state's attorneys, public defenders and other court personnel are essential. Uniform standards should be used for appointing public defenders.

Sentencing Laws and Procedures

- The League believes that judges should retain the discretion to choose between imprisonment and probation for most offenses and opposes the proliferation of non probationable offenses.
- The League believes that there should be strict penalties and enforcement for all crimes committed with a handgun or an assault weapon (see LWVIL Gun Violence Prevention position).
- The League supports reduction in time served as an incentive for good conduct by inmates. Such credits should be incorporated into the sentencing structure and should not be revoked without due process.
- The League believes that a body, free from political influence, should make recommendations that promote certainty and fairness in sentencing, develop guidelines that provide greater uniformity and monitor the fiscal impact and effect on prison populations.

Alternatives to Incarceration The League supports the expansion of prevention and treatment programs to ease the burden on the criminal justice system. The League supports the concept of pretrial diversion. The League supports the increased use of a range of intermediate sanctions in the community and the development of screening and supervision standards to ensure their appropriate use. The community must be educated regarding these alternatives.

The League supports a statewide probation system. Probation, the underlying element of most alternatives, must be professionally staffed and removed from political influence. Probation officers should be required to meet uniform professional standards and receive pre-service and in-service training. The number of probation officers should be adequate to make comprehensive investigative reports to the court, supervise categorized, manageable caseloads and provide social services.

Jail Standards The League supports the development and enforcement of standards for local jails and detention facilities. The Illinois Department of Corrections is an appropriate agency to carry out this function.

Illinois Department of Corrections

- The League supports correctional services that conform to national professional standards.
- The League believes that offenders are entitled to mail, telephone calls, visits from relatives, extended family visits, furloughs, the opportunity to voice grievances, and access to information in their case records.
- Education and job training for inmates should be provided in conjunction with the boards of education, private industry and unions.
- The League supports pre-release planning to bridge the gap between prison and the community.
- The League supports mandatory supervised release and the provision of community services to offenders, particularly when first released. Technical violations of mandatory supervised release need to be carefully defined and uniformly reported.

Citizen Involvement The criminal justice system should make use of professionally directed volunteers who have been carefully

screened and trained. The League supports citizen involvement in monitoring court proceedings and assessing the needs for improved court facilities. An independent citizen's committee should monitor Illinois correctional facilities.

Funding The League believes that the criminal justice system must be adequately funded in order to carry out its goals.

Funding of specialized programs for offenders, such as mental health services, programs for female offenders and substance abuse treatment, is essential.

The League supports funding to guarantee humane prison conditions and to provide programs and services that offer the opportunity for self-improvement. The League believes that state funds should emphasize community sanctions over the construction of more prisons.

Background:

Delegates to the 1995 LWVIL Convention adopted by concurrence a revised position following a review by a statewide committee. The revision pulled together the following positions:

- Bail bond, pretrial release and victimless crimes (1972)
- Probation and parole; inmate rights and services (1973)
- Handgun (1976) and Assault Weapons (1989) Control
- Improved courtroom procedures based on recommendations of the Illinois Court Watching Project after monitoring some 82,000 criminal court proceedings (1979)
- Sentencing laws (1982)
- Alternatives to incarceration and state funding role (1983)

Recent LWVIL Action:
2009-2011

LWVIL Supported efforts to revise criminal laws and to establish the Illinois Sentencing Policy Advisory Council [PA 96-711]

The League continued to advocate for: community supervision and treatment of non-violent offenders; the creation of drug schools and mental health courts; the creation of a system of probation with state standards and funding; the establishment of an array of intermediate sanctions for probation violators; evidence based practices; legislation to prohibit shackling inmates when giving birth; specialized services that meet the needs of offenders who are mothers, substance abusers or mentally ill; educational and vocational programs to reduce recidivism; and the removal of barriers to employment for persons with criminal records.

LWVIL Opposed the expansion of mandatory prison sentences and the attempts to establish chain gangs

2011-2013

TFAs were sent, supporting the following legislation which became law:

- SB 2621 (PA 97-0697) permits inmates to earn credits toward release through good conduct, completing educational and vocational programs.
- SB 3349 (PA 97-1118) diverts first time felony offenders from incarceration and allows the dismissal of felony charges upon the successful completion of a diversion program.
- HB 5771(PA 97-1113) expands the eligibility of ex-offenders to receive certificates of good conduct (certifying rehabilitation) which enhance their prospects for employment.
- HB 3061(PA 98-0142) allows more non-violent felonies to be sealed, four years after sentence is completed.
- HB 1046 (PA 98-0139) Those leaving prison are allowed to begin the

process of enrolling in Medicaid in a timely fashion to ensure continuity of medical and behavioral health care upon release.

- SB 1872 (PA 98-0538) eliminates the felony enhancement for prostitution.

The 2013 Issues Briefing included a criminal justice workshop, featuring panelists from the John Howard Association, the Safer Foundation, and Appleseed Fund for Justice. Topics covered diversion programs, the closing of the Tamms (Supermax) Correctional Center on January 4 and the possible closing of Dwight Correctional Center (which was closed in March), the restoration of sentencing credits, and issues facing people with criminal records reentering society.

2013-2015

Criminal Justice reform has become a bipartisan issue: in 2014, the General Assembly created a Joint Criminal Justice Reform Committee and Governor Rauner created a Criminal Justice Reform Commission.

In 2013, TFAs were sent, supporting: **HB3061 (PA 98-0142)** allows more non-violent felonies to be sealed; **HB 1046 (PA 98-0139)** allows those leaving prison to begin the process of enrolling in Medicaid to ensure coverage once released; **SB 1872 (PA 98-0538)** eliminates the felony enhancement for prostitution.

In 2014, the League signed onto fact sheets and filed witness slips in support of HB5701 (PA 98-0774) “Bans the Box” so that a job applicant is not required to reveal a criminal record or criminal history until a job interview or employment has been offered; and **HB2378 (PA 98-1009)** provides for the sealing of certain misdemeanor offenses **Other important legislation that was signed into law: PA 98-0194—**expands the

Medicaid program in Illinois, giving many in the criminal justice system access to medical and behavioral healthcare; **PA 98-0165**—grants tax credits to employers hiring qualified ex-offenders; **PA 98-0399** expunges eligible class 3 and 4 felony convictions for veterans, honorably discharged;

PA 98-0547 expands the recording of homicide interrogations to more violent felonies; **PA 98-0164**) expands first-offender pre-conviction probation with charges expunged upon successful completion; **PA98-1082** improves guardianship provisions so that incarcerated parents' rights are protected and observed.

In 2015, the League submitted witness slips for: HB3149 (PA99-0378) which allows people who earn a vocational certification, GED, HS Diploma or some other degree to petition to have their eligible convictions sealed prior to the statutorily required 4 year waiting period; **HB3475** (PA99-0381) expanding the eligibility for Certificates of Good Conduct to include those who have committed non-sex-related forcible felonies.

Other important legislation that was signed into law: PA99-0425 creates a pilot program in Cook County to do drug analysis in the field as is done in other Illinois counties. This avoids unwarranted incarceration of innocent people.

PA99-0109 allows an affirmative defense to a charge of prostitution. **PA99-0352** is an omnibus police reform bill which could become a national model for law enforcement reform. Statewide guidelines are created for police body-worn cameras and implements policies to end stop and frisk discriminatory practices and much more.

Collaborative Activity:

These organizations, through their advocacy efforts, informative conferences, other gatherings, and communications have been essential partners: Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Jobs Council, the Community Renewal Society,

Heartland Alliance, the Illinois Justice Project, the John Howard Association, Juvenile Justice Initiative, Northwestern Law, the Safer Foundation, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, and Uptown Peoples Law Center.

2015-17

These bills, passed in the balance of the 99th General Assembly and supported by the League, expanded employment opportunities for returning citizens:

HB4360 (PA99-0667), HB4515 (PA99-0872), HB5973 (PA99-0876), SB42 (PA99-0886), and SB3005 (PA99-0884).

The **Final Report of the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Report** was released in January, 2017, but the General Assembly still has not addressed a number of important recommendations. Overcrowding in prisons will not significantly be reduced until sentences for more serious crime are shortened. The League supported these reform bills passed during the 100th General Assembly and signed by the Governor:

HB0375 (PA100-0247) (requires probation officers to undergo Crisis Intervention Team training)

HB0514 (PA100-0282) (requires immediate sealing of a record of arrest or charge if result is acquittal or dismissal)

HB0698 (PA100-0283) (creates the Prisoner Entrepreneur Education Program to teach business skills and enable successful reentry into society)

HB2373 (PA100-0284) (expands record sealing eligibility)

HB2738 (PA100-0030) (allows video visitation in prisons to enable those in prison to maintain relationships with loved ones)

HB3712 (PA100-0198) (helps men and women in prison to get access to tablets that will be used expressly to educate, hone skills, and video visit loved ones)

SB1688 (PA100-0286) (improves occupational licensing opportunities by creating a licensing process that looks at license applicants' rehabilitation along with criminal history)

SB1781 (PA100-0287) (extends expungement or sealing fee waiver pilot program)

The League supported this reform bill passed during the 100th General Assembly which still awaits the Governor's signature:

HB303 (reforms civil asset forfeiture law in order to protect innocent parties and to require law enforcement to report assets seized)

The LWVIL and the Chicago League have endorsed a report issued by The Children and Family Justice Center at the Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law entitled **Building a Safe Chicago: Calling for a Comprehensive Plan**. The Report urges leadership to reject reactionary and unproven crime fighting policies and instead attack the root causes of violence with a comprehensive crime prevention plan that will put public health first, reduce illegal handgun availability, tailor punishment to the crime, ensure police effectiveness, and invest to achieve equity in economically-disadvantaged communities. The recommendations are applicable state-wide.

At 2017 convention, LWVIL voted to update the criminal justice position which was last revised in 1995.

See also LWVIL Gun Violence Prevention position which became a separate position in

1989; LWVIL Death Penalty Abolition position, which was separated in 2005; LWVIL Mental Health; LWVIL State Election Laws position for action on securing voting rights for detainees; and LWVUS Social Policy positions.)

Death Penalty Abolition

LWVIL Position - 2001

LWVUS Concurrence - 2006

LWVIL Position:

The League supports abolition of the death penalty in Illinois because it does not function as an appropriate punishment for the following reasons:

- In practice, the death penalty is unfair, it targets the poor and other vulnerable people— people who are mentally ill, mentally retarded, brain-damaged, and members of an ethnic or racial minority group.
- The death penalty is not a deterrent. States without the death penalty—Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan—have crime rates equal to or less than that of Illinois.
- The nations with which we most identify—the nations of the European Union and Canada, for example—have abolished the death penalty and consider it a violation of human rights.
- The death penalty does not serve the interests of family members of victims since the necessary and lengthy appeals process postpones the realization of justice and so, can retard the healing process.
- An error cannot be corrected if the death penalty is carried out on an innocent person.
- The death penalty is extremely expensive, due to the so-called precautions and extra measures taken to insure that only appropriate defendants receive the death penalty. Adding to the expense is the necessity for re-sentencing and retrials due to the extensive error-rate – nearly 50% of all cases in Illinois. Resources expended for the death penalty could be better used

for positive programs that reduce crime and serve the victims of crime.

- Reform has been tried and has not worked. In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the death penalty statutes of 40 states. The Court held that extensive jury discretion over death sentences resulted in arbitrary sentencing and therefore resulted in “cruel and unusual” punishment. However, in 1976, after various states enacted reforms that limited discretion, the Supreme Court held that the death penalty was constitutional.

Illinois’ statute was a result of extensive reforms; and yet, the Governor’s Commission on Capital Punishment in April of 2002 identified 85 reforms that were needed to correct the system. Even though in 2003 a few significant reforms passed, the vast majority of the Commission’s recommendations were not addressed. Moreover, the Governor’s Commission recognized that even if every reform were adopted, the system would still not be error-free: “The Commission was unanimous in the belief that no system, given human nature and frailties, could ever be devised or constructed that would work perfectly and guarantee absolutely that no innocent person is ever again sentenced to death.” (Report of the Commission on Capital Punishment, Conclusion, pg. 207.)

Background

In 2001, LWVIL Convention delegates adopted the Evanston League’s position supporting abolition of the death penalty by concurrence.

In 2003-2004, LWVIL conducted a nationwide campaign to bring a death penalty concurrence to the floor of the 2004 LWVUS convention. Although The effort fell short of the 2/3 vote needed for adoption, LWVIL was able to bring the issue back to the 2006 convention where the concurrence was adopted by a wide margin. It is now a LWVUS position.

LWVIL Action

2009: LWVIL members asked legislators to co-sponsor the abolition bill, sponsored by Karen Yarborough with 19 co-sponsors. It was voted out of committee and later re-referred to the Rules Committee. Also that year, two former death row inmates became the nineteenth and twentieth men to be exonerated from death row in Illinois.

The Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (ICADP) partners developed a 1-3 year abolition strategy.

2010: ICADP asked for the League’s help to contact legislators in targeted districts and build quiet support so an abolition bill might pass during either the 2010 Veto Session or the spring 2011 session. A TFA explaining the strategy was included in the February Issues Briefing packets and sent to grassroots advocates and local League presidents.

Again in March, the League cosponsored the Abolition Lobby Day. Local Leagues and members built extensive support for abolition by visiting targeted legislators, writing postcards and letters and calling their legislators. Local Leagues also helped organize ICADP’s two speaking tours in the fall, featuring death row exonerees and murder victims’ family members. The abolition bill was not called for a vote during the Veto Session.

2011: VICTORY!

During the lame duck session, the House approved the measure on House on January 6th and the Senate approved on January 11th. On March 9, Governor Quinn signed the legislation, and he commuted the sentences of the fifteen men on death row to life without parole. Capital punishment was officially abolished in Illinois on July 1, 2011.

Since that time, legislation has been introduced in the General Assembly to restore the death penalty in Illinois. LWVIL monitors this legislation and remains ready to take action if any such proposal begins to gain support.

Gun Violence Prevention

Illinois Assault Weapons Control - 1989

LWVUS Gun Control - 1990

Handgun Control

1976

LWVIL Position:

To curb the proliferation of the private ownership of handguns and their irresponsible use, the League supports a ban on the further manufacture, sale, transportation and importation of handguns and their parts.

- The League supports restrictive regulation of all handguns and ammunition, enforcement of existing regulations and strict penalties for crimes committed with a handgun.
- The League favors federal legislation governing the use of handguns, but will support legislation at all levels of government meeting League criteria. The League will not support state or federal legislation for specific areas only, such as metropolitan or high crime areas.
- To ensure that handgun owners assume complete responsibility for their handguns, the League supports registration of the handgun itself so that it can be traced to its owner. There should be comprehensive licensing procedures, with gun safety education, fingerprinting and photographs, plus a verification of the applicant's qualifications and a permit system that restricts handgun ownership. Sufficient fees should be paid by handgun owners to cover administrative costs. Ideally, local or state governments should enforce federal standards.
- The League supports handgun safety education only if it is required for owners as part of the licensing procedure, does not promote or glorify handgun usage or ownership, and is used to convey the dangers of handgun misuse and ownership.
- The League supports regulation of handgun dealers. All dealers selling handguns must be

carefully regulated to assure that they are legitimate dealers and not merely persons wishing to have access to interstate shipments. The League recommends high fees, annual renewal of licenses and a thorough investigation of dealers and their places of business. The League supports the need for further controls or elimination of mail order sales and interstate shipments.

Assault Weapons Control

1989

LWVIL Position:

- The League advocates restricting access to automatic and semi-automatic assault type weapons. These weapons present a clear and unequivocal danger to public safety. Therefore, the League believes that it is essential to restrict or prohibit the possession and sale, manufacture, importation and transportation of semi-automatic assault type weapons for private ownership. Additionally, the sale of ammunition for these weapons should be restricted or prohibited.
- The League favors restrictive legislation at both the state and federal levels.

Background:

The LWVIL position on **handgun control** was reached in 1976 after a statewide study. The **assault weapons control** position was adopted by concurrence at the 1989 LWVIL Convention. The LWVIL led the successful effort to adopt a **national gun control** position at the 1990 LWVUS Convention.

LWVIL is an active coalition partner with the Illinois Campaign Against Handgun Violence (ICHV) and maintains ties with the Brady Campaign.

Recent LWVIL Action:

2010-2011

- Supreme Court handed down its decision in *McDonald v Chicago* in June, striking down Chicago's long-standing handgun ban.
- LWVIL supported House bills requiring universal background checks for all gun transactions and a ban of military-style

weapons and ammunition. Neither came to a vote.

- LWVIL opposed a House bill allowing extension of concealed-carry rights. The bill did not come up for a vote.
- LWVIL and ICHV fought to defeat a new **Concealed-Carry Weapons** bill (HB 148) which would further extend gun owners' rights to carry concealed loaded guns in public places. LWVIL sent out several TFAs on and ICHV lobbied extensively against the bill, which failed.

2013

Many Times for Action (TFAs) were sent to League members throughout the spring session. Following the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals decision to strike down Illinois' Concealed Carry-Weapons (CCW) ban declaring it to be unconstitutional, our coalition, ICHV, planned an anti-gun Advocacy & Rally Day in Springfield. Many LWVIL members throughout the state attended; Gov. Quinn and many elected officials and victims' families spoke. . LWVIL distributed many copies of "Making Your Voice Heard" to other coalition members in Springfield.

Individual states can determine their own additions to CCW. ICHV has pursued several different restrictions where weapons may be carried. Although the coalition is very disappointed Illinois was forced to allow CCW, some common sense gun laws have been adopted: universal background checks on all gun sales and lost/stolen firearms must be reported to law enforcement within 72 hours.

2014

No new bills adopted except for minor language changes.

2015

Currently, ICHV is spearheading efforts to persuade municipal officials, local law enforcement and faith leaders from across

Illinois to support a new state law that would require the licensing of gun dealers. At present there is not a state law, only a federal licensing law monitored by Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) which is checked approximately every 10 years. Since there are many difficulties in pursuing the above course of action, LWVIL is planning to involve local Leagues through the use of TFAs.

2015-17 LWVIL continues to be a member of Illinois Coalition Against Handgun Violence (ICHV). The coalition is composed of many anti-gun violence groups, agencies, and religious organizations.

For the past two years, the League has been working with the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence to advocate for a state law that would require the licensing of gun dealers. At present there is not a state law, only a federal licensing law monitored by Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) which is checked approximately every 10 years. Time for Action: Over the past two years, LWVIL issued TFA's related to a Lethal Violence Protection for Family members and to Gun Dealer Licensing.

Immigration

2007

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes:

- That the State of Illinois should promote local community efforts to provide orientation and counseling services for immigrants regardless of documentation status. The State of Illinois should support funding efforts for these services by encouraging federal funding and by the use of funds from the state and local governments as well as from the private sector.
- That the State of Illinois should promote and fund educational programs and materials that seek to inform all workers,

including documented and undocumented immigrants, of their rights in the workplace.

- That the State of Illinois should provide "driving certificates" or some other form of proof of driving validation to undocumented drivers, allowing those drivers to drive legally and ensuring that they would have passed a state driving test. The LWVIL also believes the State of Illinois should permit and encourage auto insurance providers to issue insurance coverage to holders of such driving certificates.

The LWVIL opposes:

- Deputization of state and local police to enforce immigration laws in Illinois.
- Legislation or ordinances at the state and local level that would penalize landlords for renting to undocumented immigrants.
- Legislation or ordinances at the state and local level that would prohibit the issuance of business permits to undocumented immigrants.
- LWVIL does not support extending the right to vote to undocumented immigrants.

Background

The topic had crept up the "awareness ladder" in the United States. Specifically, in Illinois, a state with one of the largest immigrant populations in the country, it was and continues to be debated regularly in the media and by our elected local and state officials. Because of the federal government's inability to pass enforceable immigration laws, legislation was and still is being introduced in the General Assembly and communities have been considering local ordinances to address immigration issues.

The scope of the June 2005 LWVIL adopted study was: "How should Illinois respond to the challenges and opportunities of immigration in the areas of economic policy, social policy which includes education, and

the governmental process?" Following the two year study funded through the generosity of local Leagues, the study committee narrowed the focus of the consensus questions to what could be addressed at the state level. In addition to those questions where there was consensus and that now make up the immigration position, the LWVUS and LWVIL have existing positions on fiscal policy and social policy to include education and healthcare that do not specify citizenship as a prerequisite to application as needed.

LWVIL Action:

Immigration Reform did not advance during 2009 and 2010. At the Federal Level, President Obama did not have the votes to pass any meaningful legislation. During the lame duck session, Illinois Senator Durbin and others were unsuccessful in passing a federal Dream Act to provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

New laws introduced in several states in 2010 were intended to restrict undocumented immigrant activity (i.e. renting housing or gathering for day jobs) and to give local police the right to question drivers and ask for identification.

2011, Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin (D-IL), reintroduced the DREAM Act in Congress, and the Illinois DREAM Act became law. It offers undocumented youth access to higher education and establishes a privately-funded Illinois DREAM Fund, administered by a volunteer state commission, that makes scholarships available to immigrants' children who graduate from Illinois high schools. The Illinois DREAM Act does not impose any cost to Illinois taxpayers.

June 2012 – The Obama Administration called for Deferred Action for Childhood

Arrivals (DACA) deferring deportation for certain undocumented young people who came to the US as children and pursued education or military service in the US. An estimated 15,000 came to Navy Pier in Chicago on the first day of registration for this program. In the US, up to 1.7 million of the 4.4 million undocumented immigrants age 30 and under potentially qualify for DACA, according to new estimates from the Pew Hispanic Center.

2013 – The Illinois House passed SB957, Undocumented immigrants in Illinois can now get a Temporary Visitor Driver’s License (TVDL). These licenses are different from regular Illinois licenses and are not valid for identification, but they will allow holders to drive legally. Additionally, in order to get a TVDL, an applicant needs to

- Prove residence in Illinois for at least one year;
- Provide a valid, unexpired passport or consular ID;
- Provide other proof of identity and residency that the Secretary of State might require;
- Provide documentation that he/she is not eligible for a Social Security Number;
- Pass all applicable vision, written, and road tests;
- Show proof of insurance for the vehicle used for the road test;
- Pay a \$30 fee.

2013 – A comprehensive immigration reform bill which includes a path to citizenship for over 11 million undocumented immigrants in the US passed the US Senate in a strong bipartisan vote.

LWVIL issued a TFA and a Letter to the Editor urging members of the House to support comprehensive immigration reform.

2015-17 After the Supreme Court’s split decision in June 2016, when President Obama’s Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) and expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programs were blocked, action on immigration had been stalled—until the January 2017 inauguration of the 45th president.

Since January 20, there has been a flurry of activity around immigration and refugees. President Trump signed executive orders on January 25 to enable construction of a wall at the US and Mexico border, increase border patrol forces and immigration officers, withhold federal grant funding for sanctuary cities, and increase deportations of undocumented immigrants. That same week, President Trump signed an executive order for a temporary ban of refugees awaiting resettlement in the US. It also banned citizens of seven majority Muslim countries from entering the US on a Visa. This created chaos at US airports, resulting in protests and court action.

A Washington State federal judge put a temporary halt to Trump’s ban, which was affirmed on February 9th by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. Then, the same week the “Travel Ban” was being decided in court, ICE conducted deportation round-ups in 7 major cities around the country, detaining over 600 people in a week’s time. It is now clear that ICE plans to intensify these round-ups, and the current political climate has created a tremendous amount of fear within immigrant communities. Not long after Trump’s initial Travel Ban was halted, the White House issued an amended Executive Order barring those from 6 Muslim countries to enter the US. This ban, like its predecessor, is often referred to as the “Muslim Ban.” Federal judges ruled against the ban, preventing it from going into effect. Immigrants, especially

those who are undocumented, continue to live in fear of detention, deportation, and family separation.

Many good government groups and immigrant-friendly organizations are providing “Know Your Rights” trainings and assisting these populations in putting together family and estate plans in anticipation of separation (temporary custody for children, etc.). Schools are seeing an increased rate of absenteeism from these populations as a result of these fears. Activity in Illinois and the US: In response to Trump’s actions, there has been a lot of activity in the Illinois General Assembly, with proposals ranging from inviting Mexico’s President Pena Nieto to Illinois to increasing immigrant protections in the state. Chicago Municipal ID Program: In April 2017, the Chicago City Council approved a Municipal ID program. This identification card benefits individuals who either cannot or have difficulty obtaining government issued documents, including immigrants, homeless persons, persons with disabilities, returning citizens, and transgender individuals. Chicago’s Welcoming City Ordinance already limits access of immigration status information and interactions with immigration enforcement.

The BRIDGE (Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy) Act in Congress: In January 2017, Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) re-introduced the BRIDGE Act, bipartisan legislation that would allow people who are eligible for or who have received work authorization and temporary relief from deportation through DACA to continue living in the U.S. with permission from the federal government. Identical legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Mike Coffman (R-CO).

Status of LWVIL Immigration TFAs: · HB3099 The Trust Act – (sent out March 5, 2017) Protect and build trust between law enforcement agencies and immigrant communities by limiting police involvement in federal immigration enforcement. Referred to Rules Committee at the end of March. · HB426 The Safe Zones Act – (sent out March 5, 2017) Protect state funded schools, universities, and healthcare facilities from allowing access to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or agencies working on behalf of ICE without a valid court-issued warrant. Referred to Rules Committee at the end of March. · SB0031 The Illinois Trust Act – (sent out April 11, 2017) Introduced by Senator Cullerton, seeks to protect and build trust between law enforcement agencies and immigrant communities by limiting local police involvement in federal immigration enforcement. Passed in the IL Senate on May 4, 2017 and arrived in the IL House on May 5, where its chief sponsor is Rep. Chris Welch.

Other League activity around the state: · The Rockford League held an immigration program in March 2017 to build support for current state legislation to ensure protection and safety for our immigrant communities. The Rockford League is working with immigration attorneys in fighting the Winnebago sheriff’s efforts to lease jail space to ICE and cooperate with immigration agents. · The Roselle League was asked to attend a Town Hall with their state representative in April 2017 in order to help build support for the Trust Act. · Members in Lake County currently are looking to work with Mano a Mano in support of immigrant communities.

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· The McLean County League currently is working with another community group, Illinois People’s Action, to pass a

“Welcoming City” ordinance that would help keep immigrant families together and safe. In DuPage County, there have been visits with local school district superintendents (coordinated by DuPage United) to ask what they are doing to help protect children in the possibility of parent detention or deportation.

(See LWVUS Immigration position.)

Income Assistance

1971, Revised 1997

LWVIL Position:

- LWVIL believes that the federal government should bear primary responsibility for financing programs designed to meet the basic needs of individuals and families.
- LWVIL supports secondary state funding for income assistance and supportive services for all low-income individuals and families.
- The administration of income assistance and supportive services requires the recruitment, retention, and training of sufficient numbers of qualified personnel; clear guidelines for responsibility; adequate information systems; and program evaluation.

Background

1971: LWVIL and LWVUS conducted simultaneous studies of income assistance and alternatives to welfare

A revised position was adopted at the 1997 Convention, affirming that federal funding should be the primary source for income assistance; the State’s role should be a strong secondary, not supplemental, source.

2013: As of the Spring 2013 legislative session, TANF recipients no longer have an asset limitation in Illinois. This means having assets such as a car, house, savings account no longer are counted as income, thus helping

to promote higher self sufficiency for the family.

2015: Survey results of state-funded homeless service providers found 90% of these providers needing to deny assistance. The lack of funding since July 2015 has affected programs such as Homelessness Prevention, Homeless Youth, Emergency and Transitional Housing and Supportive Housing Services, even with increased demand for these services. Some programs for adolescent substance abuse treatment programs have closed without the state funding help. In addition to the lack of state funds, providers are concerned with the impact in the provision of matching federal dollar funding.

Two housing legislation pieces passed in 2015: SB 1440, the Reverse Mortgage Consumer Protections which includes provisions to be certain seniors considering reverse mortgages are protected against scams and predatory lending practices. SB1547, protecting people from punishment for calling 911 in response to domestic or sexual violence or for crimes committed against them, seen as "nuisance calls".

Recent LWVIL Action:

2008 While there was a small TANF increase, the economic climate did not allow salaries deemed to be a living wage to raise a family’s income above the poverty level. In addition, fewer voucher opportunities and higher rents led to more homeless individuals and families with children needing services.

IL budget cuts meant cuts in crucial services to vulnerable individuals and families just when those services were most needed. Education and training opportunities - needed for a skilled modern workforce - lagged behind the growing numbers of people needing them.

League supported a refundable state earned income tax credit increase and the effective Workforce Investment Act.

LWVIL worked with Voices for IL Children, Housing Action IL, National Low Income Housing Coalition, Illinois Works for the Future, the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and groups at the State and Federal levels. We joined the Responsible Budget Coalition to regain funding for services to lower income families and individuals in Illinois.

2009-2011

- LWVIL supported an improved **workforce development system** to aid disadvantaged job seekers and low income workers throughout the state, including more post high school educational opportunities.
- LWVIL continues to support efforts to provide funding for **supportive living initiatives** including food programs and utility aid programs.
- LWVIL supported **child care assistance for low income families** for whom quality child care is vital, and worked to keep co-payment requirements at a reasonable level.
- LWVIL has supported an increase in the **Earned Income Tax Credit** to give more money back to low income workers and help meet families' needs.
- LWVIL has worked to provide **safe, affordable and quality housing**: ensuring safe housing for domestic violence victims and protecting renters in foreclosed homes and apartments
- LWVIL continues to support capital budget funds for **affordable housing**, including housing for veterans and people with disabilities.
- LWVIL has supported State level initiatives to help struggling homeowners to modify their mortgages so they can afford their payments and avoid foreclosures.

- We continue to monitor such funds as the CDBG and CSBG as well as the Low Income Housing Trust Fund.

2011-2013

League continues to advocate for quality child care assistance and early intervention/early learning funding.

We continue to advocate for funding from Federal and State resources for affordable housing efforts for all individuals and families including veterans and people with disabilities.

We continue to advocate for State supports for those struggling with their mortgages and possible foreclosures.

In addition League is advocating for a raise in the minimum wage [presently \$8.25 per hour] here in Illinois to help workers to become more self sufficient in their daily lives. Many low income individuals within a family are working more than one job daily and yet are struggling to provide the basic living needs of housing, utilities, child care, transportation and food. Raising the minimum wage also will strengthen the local small business economy since families would spend the income in their communities. Presently, a full time minimum wage jobs pays just \$17,160 annually, well below the federal poverty level of \$19,090 for a family of three.

2013-2015

League continues to advocate for early intervention programs, TANF assistance, Medicaid and child care programs and employment training programs to be funded well. We advocate for SNAP [food assistance] to be well funded. The U.S. Farm Bill was passed which provides the food assistance rules for the Country.

The League advocated for an advisory referendum to increase the minimum wage to \$10. While the referendum passed, no action has been taken by the Legislature.

The League of Women Voters IL positions re employment, children's issues, income assistance, fair housing, affordable housing and public transportation remain in need of advocates around Illinois. We continue to work with resources on these from Voices for Illinois Children, Shriver Poverty Law Center, Housing Action Illinois, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Jobs Council, Citizen Action/IL, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and other research agencies, including CLASP, National Low Income Housing Agency and Center for Budget Policy Priorities on the national level.

2015-2017 : We have concern regarding the tax policies which help top income families and corporations while cutting services highly needed for working families and older Americans, including Medicaid, SNAP, education, housing and children's services .

Low and Moderate Income Housing

LWVIL Position:

The Illinois League believes

- The State should plan for adequate supplies of low and moderate-income housing.
- Builders of large developments and planned unit developments should be required to provide a percentage of their units for low and moderate income housing.
- Some kind of fair-share plan should be developed so that every community will have a percentage of low and moderate income housing, rather than having it concentrated in a few areas of the state. This kind of housing should be attractive and diversified in design and should be subsidized by both state and federal levels.

- The League believes an educational program is needed to explain the need for and concept of low and moderate-income housing and that, when necessary, zoning laws should be revised to accommodate such housing.

LWVIL Action

2009-2011: LWVIL worked to provide safe, affordable and quality housing for domestic violence victims and for renters who live in homes and apartments that are foreclosed. (See LWVIL Social Policy positions)

2015-2017 LWVIL has worked with National Low Income Housing Coalition and Housing Action IL as well as Il Housing Development Agency on the many issues in affordable and fair housing. IHDA works to give funding opportunities to aid lower income and moderate individuals and families for the housing needs.

In 2016 the first National Housing Trust Fund dollars, \$4.3 million, were allocated to Illinois to create and preserve and rehab rental homes that are affordable for extremely low income households. These funds will be used for housing people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness or household head with a disability or illness.

Mental Health

1987, 1989 and 2017

LWVIL position:

The League supports

- A comprehensive and coordinated system of services for mental/behavioral health. The Illinois Department of Human Services should ensure both adequate state hospitals and community services to treat and rehabilitate the seriously mentally ill. These services should be integrated with those of other state agencies.

- A state mandate that adequate and accessible community services be available for seriously mentally ill persons of all ages. The array of services should include: screening and evaluation, community hospitalization, medication management and counseling, crisis intervention, case management, day treatment, life skills programs, residential programs, job training, social and recreational activities, educational services, family support and respite programs, and transportation.
- The State should provide adequate funding for state facilities and should be the primary source of funding for community-based mental health services. Local government, together with federal and non-government sources, should also contribute to community services. Funding should be tied to identified needs and effectiveness of services.
- State and local government should share the responsibility for planning for community services; implementation should be left to local government. A system of local boards to administer funds for services for the mentally ill should be required throughout the state. The boards should have the power to tax and to allocate state and federal funds for community services and for hospitalization of mentally ill persons. The boards should coordinate and monitor community services.
- The State should set and enforce standards for all mental health programs and facilities it funds.
- The State should also be responsible for evaluating community-based services. There should be minimum training requirements for professionals and other personnel working in state-funded programs. The State should require local governments to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.
- The League encourages increased use of involuntary commitment to outpatient

services of seriously mentally ill persons, when appropriate, to assist in keeping them from repeated and prolonged hospitalizations.

- Insurance companies should be required to offer coverage for mental illness on the same basis as physical illness.
- Community education about mental illness should be emphasized, and innovative ways to improve the delivery of community-based mental health services should be encouraged. Financial incentives should be offered to communities that reduce unnecessary hospital bed usage by providing adequate community-based services while assuring that mentally ill persons who need hospitalization will not be denied.

Recent LWVIL Action:

Insurance Parity

League worked in coalition for over five years to achieve insurance parity for mental illness and continued to advocate for stronger legislation. At the national level, Congress passed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Dominici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 requiring the Departments of Labor (DOL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Treasury to issue regulations before the act went into effect in 2010.

Mental Health Summit Coalition

LWVIL has been a coalition partner to preserve and increase mental health services funding. Activities include media work, lobbying, engaging traditional and non-traditional allies and identifying issues that focus attention on the problems caused by underfunding mental health services in the state.

2009-2011 Action

- Supported keeping new federal and state funds in the mental health system.

- Continued to advocate on behalf of persons in prisons, jails, nursing homes and homeless shelters by monitoring and promoting programs that would improve inmates' and residents' lives.
- Testified before Governor Quinn's Nursing Home Safety Reform Commission.

2011 Action

- Local Leagues testified at public hearings opposing mental health facility closures due to state budget cuts without plans in place to serve clients.
- LWVIL wrote a letter in support of a multi purpose facility to be built in the NW Chicago suburbs that would provide low income housing and mental health services.

2012-2013 Action

*From 2009 to 2011 Illinois cut almost \$114 million in General Revenue funding for mental health and was fourth in all the states for total cuts. During that period, Illinois cut its total mental health care budget by more than 30 percent. The Governor signed HB190 in March 2013 restoring \$12 million supplement funding allocation for FY 13.

*The Governor signed PA 97-0439 amendment to the Community Mental Health Act (405ILCS20) to mandate counties and Cook County townships with no local mental health authorities to form a mental health advisory committee. The seven-member mental health advisory committee is charged with identifying and assessing current mental health services, monitoring the expansion or contraction of those services, and, if necessary, recommending any additional services. The boards should have the power to tax and to allocate state and federal funds for community services and hospitalization of mentally ill persons.

*On July 22, 2013 Senate Bill 26 went into law as Public Act 98-0104. This law will implement the Affordable Care Act in Illinois by expanding Medicaid to 138% of the poverty level. This expansion will result in the largest increase in mental health funding in the state since the enactment of Medicaid decades ago.

*LWVIL advocated for the HB1538 Mental Health First Aid training act. The Department of Human Services will establish and administer the act so that certified trainers can provide Illinois residents, professionals and members of the public with training on how to identify and assist someone who is believed to be developing or has developed a mental health or substance abuse disorder or is believed to be experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis.

2015-17 Governmental Action: Illinois continues to offer expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Health Care Act which has opened affordable treatment programs for persons with mental health and substance abuse problems. Stroger Hospital which serves Cook county residents is running without a deficit-the first time in recent decades. The Governor has proposed a significant cut to Medicaid services which would be detrimental to these populations. Under state law, Chicago residents can gather petition signatures to place a binding referendum on the ballot to establish an Expanded Mental Health Services Program (EMHSP). Passage of the referendum will increase property tax by .025 % (A \$16 increase for a \$4,000 annual real estate bill). Funds are only for mental health services in the referendum-affected community. A governing commission of local residents oversees the funds. EMHSP's exist in the North River area and the Near West side.

Besides the new West side EMHP in Chicago, two Mental Health Boards (708) were created in Knox County and Bloomingdale Township (Thanks to the effort of the Roselle/Bloomingdale LWV) in the April 2017 election. Bloomingdale Township has a population of 111,000. League Action Local Leagues can take action under the state position which supports the establishment of mental health authorities (337, 533, 708 and the recent EMHSP's in the city of Chicago). All these boards are established by referenda. With shrinking state dollars and possible Block grants on the Federal level, local tax money for mental health services will be increasingly important.

Schools

School Quality

1986 and 1987

LWVIL Position:

Governance

The League believes that:

- The State of Illinois should determine minimum program for Illinois elementary and secondary schools.
- The Illinois State Board of Education should assume the primary leadership role in initiating policy, establishing minimum standards, and coordinating delivery of services.
- The local school board should implement minimum standards and provide leadership in the community for program development. In addition, the local school board should make recommendations to the Illinois State Board of Education concerning programs for Illinois schools.

Primary Purpose of Schooling

The League believes:

- The primary purpose of schooling is the transmission of knowledge and culture

through which children learn in areas necessary to their continuing development.

- Such areas should include the language arts, mathematics, biological and physical science, social sciences, the fine arts, physical development and health.
- Emphasis should be placed on the development of critical thinking skills and the integration of knowledge.
- Each school district shall give priority in the allocation of resources to fulfilling the primary purpose of schooling.

State Program Mandates

- The League supports the following instructional mandates: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies/history, foreign language, art and music, vocational education, special education, gifted education, early childhood education and health education. There should be flexibility in implementing mandates at the local level.
- Mandates such as metric measurement, career education, safety education and consumer education should be integrated into other programs rather than existing as separate mandates. Driver education and physical education, especially at the high school level, should continue but with more local options permitted. The League supports bilingual programs to enable non-English-speaking children to learn English as quickly as possible, but programs must be flexible.
- Local school districts should be required to provide the following services: media programs, school food services, pupil personnel services, student health programs, necessary transportation services and special services to disadvantaged children.
- The League supports state requirements for compulsory attendance and minimum standards for length of school day and school year. The League opposes any additional state-mandated school holidays.

State Standards for Schools and Students

The State should set standards for the recognition and accreditation of schools and school districts. The goals and learning objectives established by the State should be minimum standards, which local districts should enhance. Local districts should be permitted and encouraged to be flexible in the evaluation of students' learning of essential information and skills.

The State should set minimum achievement standards for graduation and promotion to various grade levels. Remediation programs should be provided at all levels of instruction for students achieving below grade level.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Education

- The League believes that the effectiveness of education should be evaluated by both class time requirements and knowledge gained as measured by mastery of learning objectives.
- Evaluation should include information assembled for the school/school district Report Cards, student test scores, programs offered, student/staff ratios, building standards, and qualifications of teachers. No one factor (e.g., test scores) should be used exclusively.
- The League does not support the withdrawal of funds from a school district that does not meet state standards, but does approve withdrawal of recognition as a last resort, after extensive and creative remediation efforts have been tried.

Personnel Issues

Teacher training and certification: The League supports stringent entrance requirements into a four-year undergraduate program for students who intend to teach. Such students should pursue an undergraduate course of study that primarily emphasizes the liberal arts and sciences and allows for early and varied teaching experiences. Certification should be granted after the student obtains a liberal arts and

sciences degree, completes a successful period of internship and passes an objective test to ensure competency in basic skills and subject matter to be taught.

Staff Evaluation: The League supports a comprehensive evaluation process for both teachers and principals.

Teachers should be evaluated by administrators (principals, department chair or other administrators) and other teachers, all of whom should receive training in teacher evaluations. A comprehensive evaluation should be based on the following criteria: attendance, classroom management skills, instructional methods, knowledge of subject matter, continuing professional education and interpersonal skills.

Principals: Evaluations of principals should be done by administrators and teachers who are trained to evaluate. The evaluation should be based on the following criteria: ability to maintain productive parent-school relationships, organizational skills, ability to establish and preserve a positive school climate, instructional leadership, ability to objectively evaluate personnel and their teaching skills, continuing professional education and interpersonal skills.

Tenure: The League favors modifications in the tenure laws including extension of the two-year probationary period, establishment of a plan for periodic renewal of tenure and elimination of seniority as the sole criterion for dismissal of teachers when reducing the teaching force (RIF, reduction in force).

Quality: To ensure that the teaching profession attracts and retains highly qualified teachers, the League supports:

- An increase in beginning teachers' salaries financed either by the State directly or through grants to local districts to use at their discretion for increased salaries.
- An increase in the role of teachers in instructional leadership and management decisions
- Establishment of a career ladder for teachers which includes increased salaries

for increased teacher responsibilities and an increase in salary for teachers who take advanced courses or obtain advanced degrees.

School Finance

1975, 1977, 1979, revised 1993, 2017

LWVIL Position:

The League believes that:

- Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade public schools should be provided stable, reliable and adequate revenue through a combination of federal, state and local sources.
- State funding levels should be sufficient to enable districts to provide for all students an education that meets both standards established by the State Board of Education and legislated mandates.

The League opposes additional mandates without state funding provisions.

- The State should not subsidize districts too small to meet state standards but rather should encourage consolidation through financial incentives.
- State standards for education should also address the importance of adequately maintaining and building school facilities.

General state aid to schools should be reviewed regularly, taking into account increases in the cost of living, professional estimates of the cost of quality educational programs, and regional differences in the costs of providing the same or similar services.

- The League strongly supports using a weighting factor for low-income students, believing that basic funding for disadvantaged students should reflect their need for additional services.
- Local districts should be held accountable by the State for the expenditure of money for programs that fill special student needs.

The distribution of state funds to public elementary and secondary schools should reduce financial disparities between districts

and increase equity for students and for taxpayers.

- The State should concentrate its efforts on raising the level of the financial resources of poorer districts.
- Capping of allowable expenditure per pupil should not be used as a means to achieve equity.
- A reasonable minimum local tax effort, achievable without referendum, should be required for a district to receive equalization aid.

The League strongly supports reduced reliance on local property taxes to fund schools and believes that the State should assume the major responsibility for funding public education.

- The League opposes proposals that would provide public funds for private schools.
- The income tax (preferably at a graduated rate) provides the most productive and equitable source of revenue for schools.
- The League opposes state assumption of the total cost of public education because it could diminish local control and educational innovation.

LWVIL Higher Education Funding Position:

LWVIL supports sustained allocation of state funds for public higher education that will provide quality postsecondary programs throughout the state. Objectives for adequate public funding should be to:

- Provide affordable educational opportunities which foster global competitiveness for the people of Illinois and their employers
- Eliminate and prohibit barriers to funding higher education: constitutional, statutory, and regulatory
- Invest in capital construction and long-term maintenance of higher education facilities
- Attract, maintain, and retain quality teaching staff

In addition, the League supports sustained funding to attract, support, and retain qualified Illinois students through:

- State-funded, need-based financial aid
- State-funded, merit-based scholarships
- State-funded grants paying for research assistantships
- State-subsidized internships

LWVIL Positions on Schools Background:

League support for equal educational opportunity is a national position that is now embodied in League principles. Because education is a responsibility of the states, however, LWVIL and many other state

Leagues have adopted positions on the equitable distribution of state resources for public schools. (See also LWVUS Social Policy positions pertaining to Equality of Opportunity, and *LWVUS Impact on Issues*.)

2008-2009: The state's fiscal problems were magnified by the national recession

2013-2015: Funding decreased, with an 89% proration of the appropriation.

- FY2015: 64.2% of IL districts are in deficit spending mode.
- FY2014: 42.4% were in deficit spending
- In Chicago, traditional public schools lost \$72M in funding, with a corresponding rise in funding to public charter schools

Recent LWVIL Action

2003-2015: Action focus adopted at each LWVIL Convention

At each convention, delegates included State Fiscal Policy and School Funding on the list of Action Foci. This led to continued public education and lobbying on school funding reform and fiscal policy issues.

2009: LWVIL passed a Will of Convention to send a letter to the Governor and the General Assembly urging them to pass a fair and equitable income tax, restore Illinois to fiscal health in an accountable and transparent manner.

2009-2011: Responsible Budget Coalition

In the face of a growing state deficit, delayed payments, and budget cuts, League joined the RBC to support and lobby for a tax increase and responsible budget that would protect essential services. In January, 2010, a temporary tax increase which would sunset in 2014 was passed.,

Corporate tax breaks

During the 2011 Veto Session, significant tax breaks were given to Sears and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and its subsidiaries when the companies threatened to leave the state. The League opposed these tax breaks as they endangered funding for schools and other essential services. The revenues lost would have a greater negative impact on essential services than the benefits from increased EITC and personal exemption.

2011-2013: Legislation of note focused on **school consolidation, school vouchers, funding for the Regional Offices of Education, PTELL (Tax Cap) legislation** which would have had a negative effect on local funding, **shifting pension costs** to local school districts. These show a disturbing trend to cost shifting from the state to local districts, accentuating inequities between districts. **All were opposed by the LWVIL.**

2014 : An advisory committee on Education Funding delivered its report in 2014. Subsequently, major legislation was proposed to make school funding more equitable. Unfortunately, in the absence of additional

funding, the bills proposed would have simply created new winners and losers.

LWVIL also created a fact sheet, completed a Witness Slip and issued a TFA opposing a bill that was intended to provide more equitable funding for schools but used a faulty formula and failed to provide for funding.

In response to a Voice of the People submitted to the Chicago Tribune by Illinois State Senator Kwame Raoul (D-13), LWVIL President Mary Kubasak sent Mr. Raoul a letter reaffirming LWVIL's position opposing proposals that would provide public funds for private schools

A witness slip was filed in opposition to a bill which would have reduced property tax rates for dual taxing districts.

LWVIL sent a letter to the Illinois State Board of Education supporting their efforts to seek a waiver from No Child Left Behind mandates.

2015: bills designed to provide equitable funding were stuck in committee..

LWVIL issued witness slips and a TFA supporting bills which would require civic education in high school.

2015-17

General Legislative Trends: · Despite the two year state budget impasse, education is one of the few discretionary line items in the budget with continued funding in both FY 16 and FY 17. Nevertheless, the state is currently \$1 billion behind in mandated grant payments · Numerous school districts in the state joined together to sue the Governor and ISBE, alleging that the state has violated constitutional rights to state funding of learning standards, to equal protection, and to

due process. · Every year there have been proposals to freeze property taxes. In 2017, the governor recommended a permanent property tax freeze as part of his bargain to sign a budget. School district personnel have indicated extreme concern. · An advisory committee was appointed by the Governor to examine school funding reform. In February, 2017, it reported that an evidence-based funding model has promise for more equitable funding. HB 2808 (Davis), and SB 1124 SAM 1 (Barickman) address the need for an evidenced based funding model.

After years of advocacy for adequate and equitable school funding in the state, a bill was passed which has the potential for equitable funding. Whether funding will be adequate will depend on revenue bills in the coming years.

However, passing a bill for Evidence-based funding came at a price – a compromise bill, which LWVIL opposed, permits tax credits for donations to private school scholarships while providing for evidence-based funding.

In 2017, funding of 80% of school districts in Illinois was below adequacy, according to Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data interpretations of the new evidence-based model. ISBE estimated that in the next 10 years, a total of \$6.5 Billion will be needed to bring all districts to adequacy.

A survey from the Illinois State Board of Education reports that of the 1,006 unfilled teacher positions in the state, 74% are in majority-minority school districts while 81%

are in districts where the majority of students are low-income.

League Actions 2015-17 Fall, 2015: TFA, video, Letters to editors, etc. regarding the need to resolve the budget impasse in order to achieve adequate funding · Feb., 2016: o TFA opposing the plan to use special education funds to equalize educational funding – the plan was dropped o Letter to Representative Mayfield opposing HB4424 – mandatory retention for third graders not reading at grade level by the end of the year. o Witness slip with written testimony plus letters to Senator Cullerton and Rep. Flynn Currie opposing HB4263, property tax cap. Stalled in committee. o Letters to Governor and to ISBE opposing the use of federal grant funds to open 48 additional charter schools. The funds were accepted for that purpose. o TFA supporting including educators on the ISBE Board. Did not pass. · Apr., 2016: o TFA opposing increasing the length of time for charter school renewals from 5-10 years. The bill was signed into law. o TFA supporting Constitutional Amendment for graduated rate income tax. Did not pass. · May, 2016: o TFA opposing a freeze on property taxes. Did not pass. o Witness slip supporting preventing Charter School Commission from overriding district decision. Did not pass. · June, 2016: TFA supporting passing a fully-funded state budget by June 30. Instead, a 6month stop-gap budget was passed. · Jan-Feb. 2017: Opposed voucher schools through a letter and witness slips · April, 2017: o TFA supporting preventing the Charter School Commission from reversing local school board decisions. o TFA supporting Civic Education in Middle School o TFA supporting preventing new charter schools from being approved in neighborhoods where traditional public schools were closed recently o TFA supporting preventing the

misuse of federal funds designed for the classroom.

Charter Schools

2001, updated in 2015

LWVIL Position:

The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports accountability, transparency, and equity in the use of public funds for education, including charter schools.

The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that

- Adequate and equitable funding is needed for all public schools, including charters. The financial impact on traditional public schools must be evaluated before charters are granted.
- Charter school authorizers should evaluate the performance of existing charters before granting new charters or approving additional campuses.
- Existing charter schools should be evaluated in incremental periods not to exceed five years (and preferably more frequently) for purposes of charter renewal.
- Charters should be revoked or not renewed if a school repeatedly or egregiously
 - * Failed to meet content standards, pupil performance standards, or school climate standards identified in the charter contract.
 - * Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management.
 - * Violated any provision of state or federal law from which the charter school was not exempt.
 - * Discriminated against students based on characteristics such as family economic circumstances, disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services.
 - * Used curriculum or instruction that failed to maintain the separation of church and state.
 - * Failed to admit prospective students periodically throughout the year as space became available.
 - * Failed to enforce truancy laws.
- Employees should have the right to organize unions at charter schools.

- The authority for approving and renewing charters should reside exclusively in the local school board.
- Local voters should be able through referendum to request their school board to establish a charter school.
- There should be adequate provisions for education of the public and participation in the authorizer's decision-making process.
- If the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) or a body appointed by ISBE, such as the State Charter School Commission, has the power to reverse a decision by a local school board, local voters should be able through referendum to override the decision of ISBE or the appointed commission.
- There needs to be good communication among all public schools regarding effective innovations.

LWVIL has identified the following areas of concern about charter schools:

1) Financial impact on school districts. For example,

- * Charters can place financial pressure on districts by drawing money out of the traditional public schools.
- * When a student transfers between traditional public and charter schools, funding for that pupil should be prorated and transferred in a timely fashion.
- * All property, equipment, and materials purchased by a charter school with public dollars should be surrendered to the local district if the school closes for any reason.

2) Privatization and profit-making. The LWVIL opposes the presence of private, for-profit companies in the governance of public education. Subcontracting most of the management of a school to a for-profit organization should be prohibited.

3) Lack of transparency. Like other public schools, charter schools should be subject to disclosure of

- 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
- Admission processes

4) Virtual education (provided by computers off-site, with students spending little if any time in a brick-and-mortar school). Virtual education is not appropriate for elementary-aged students except in rare circumstances. Funding for virtual schools should be based on actual costs, rather than the same level of funding provided to other charter schools.

LWVIL Positions on Schools Background:

League support for equal educational opportunity is a national position that is now embodied in League principles. Because education is a responsibility of the states, however, LWVIL and many other state Leagues have adopted positions on the equitable distribution of state resources for public schools. (See also LWVUS Social Policy positions pertaining to Equality of Opportunity, and LWVUS Impact on Issues.)

LWVIL Action:

School Vouchers and Charter Schools

In 2010 and 2011 LWVIL opposed bills that would fund pilot voucher programs in Chicago. Neither bill passed. Another bill to establish a task force to study further expansion of vouchers statewide drew interest but no action in the General Assembly.

- LWVIL sent a letter in opposition to a bill establishing a state commission to charter new charter schools without local district approval and removing ISBE oversight. This bill passed.
- A TFA asked that League members support - with reservations - a bill providing an alternative to the Chicago pilot voucher plan by allowing up to 5 charter schools to be created to serve the same population of students in failing or over-crowded schools. It passed.

In 2011 LWVIL issued the following TFAs:

- * opposing the creation of a charter school commission- it was passed
- * opposing a bill which would create vouchers –it was defeated.

In 2012, LWVIL issued the following TFAs * opposing asking districts to assume a higher

percentage of the costs of charter schools. The bill was defeated.

* opposing a bill making the Charter School Commission autonomous, with no operational oversight. Unfortunately, the bill passed.

Subsequently, when an issues specialist observed a meeting of the Commission, we learned from the Executive Director the Commission receives large amounts of private funding.

LWVIL also sent a letter to Greg Richmond, chair of the charter school commission, seeking clarification on the role of the commission and its goals.

In 2012, the League undertook a statewide project to pass a constitutional amendment which allows a graduated rate income tax. The action focus was readopted at the convention in 2013. LWVIL collaborated with A Better Illinois, which is under the auspices of the Responsible Budget Coalition. In 2013, LWVIL issued a Call to Action, asking local Leagues to visit legislators, send a letter to the editor and/or an editorial approved by the LWVIL president, make phone calls, and send emails and postcards in support of a graduated rate tax. The League also created a Speakers Bureau and a set of resources, including power points and brochures.

2013: The League submitted a letter to the Illinois Charter School Commission outlining concern and opposition to virtual charter schools. Two months later, the Legislature called for a moratorium on virtual charters so that the issue could be studied.

2013 LWVIL Recognizing increased proliferation of charter schools as well as an increase in educational research analyzing them since 2001, convention delegates adopted a study updating the position. The updated Charter School position was approved by the LWVIL Board in 2015.

2014: the League completed Witness Slips supporting the timely transfer of funds between a charter school and a traditional public school, opposing a reduced property tax rate for dual taxing districts.

2015: LWVIL supported legislation that would have stopped the Charter School Commission from overriding decisions of local school boards. The bill became stuck in committee

The League filed a Witness slip and issued a TFA supporting legislation to require charters to meet the same non-curricular health and safety standards as traditional public schools. This became law.

State Fiscal Policies

1977, 1980, 1981,

modified 1987, revised 1994

LWVIL Position:

The LWVIL supports a diversified revenue system which principally relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees, is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive and simple.

Criteria: The LWVIL supports a state revenue system which overall is based on the following criteria:

- 1) Equity - Imposes similar amounts of tax on taxpayers in like circumstances.
- 2) Progressivity - Is based on ability to pay so that those with greater ability pay a greater percentage of their income.
- 3) Stability - Provides a stable source of revenue.
- 4) Responsiveness - Is able to capture and reflect long-term economic growth.
- 5) Simplicity - Is easy and efficient to administer and is understandable to the taxpayer.

Income Tax: The LWVIL supports a progressive income tax with a graduated rate schedule. Until the Illinois Constitution is amended to allow graduated rates, the flat rate income tax should be made more progressive.

Sales Tax: The LWVIL supports a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for food and medicines to reduce the impact on low-income persons.

Property Tax: The LWVIL supports the use of the property tax for partially financing education and local government and services. We support uniform, efficient and professional tax assessment procedures.

User Fees: The LWVIL supports user fees structured and levied with a sensitivity to low-income persons.

Deductions, Exemptions and Credits: The LWVIL supports achieving policy goals through direct expenditures rather than deductions, exemptions and credits. If deductions, exemptions and credits are used, they should:

- 1) decrease the tax burden on lower income persons and further overall progressivity.
- 2) be periodically reviewed to justify continuation.
- 3) be the most efficient means of achieving their intended purpose.

Local Implications: Distribution of state revenues to local government is an appropriate source of local revenue. LWVIL opposes statutory limits on local government's ability to raise taxes and spend revenue. Local services mandated by the State should have state appropriations linked to the mandate.

Background:

Several positions on **taxation and assessment** were developed through land use and tax structure studies during the 1970's and combined into one item in 1977. The 1979 LWVIL Convention adopted a comprehensive study of **financing state and local government** that included revenue sources, expenditure procedures and limitations on taxing and spending. Partial consensus was reached in 1980 on **tax and spending limitations**.

A comprehensive study of the **revenue system** began in 1980. The state board

determined that the local League participation (less than 60%) in the consensus process was not an adequate basis for developing a state position. However, there was substantial agreement among the participating Leagues and the state board recommended to the 1981 LWVIL Convention that individual Leagues concur with the position statement. The convention adopted the recommendation, and concurrence was reached in the fall of 1981.

In 1993, the state board appointed a committee to review the LWVIL Fiscal Policy position. The 1994 Interim Council approved a revised position.

The 1991 LWVIL Convention adopted an action focus on **fair and adequate school funding**. Implicit in this item was a commitment to work for a **constitutional amendment for a graduated income tax** as the most equitable means of securing the revenues needed to end the disparity in educational opportunity for Illinois children.

The League supported a graduated income tax at the time of the 1970 Constitutional Convention. A political compromise, however, resulted in the approval of a **flat rate income tax**. Since then, LWVIL has worked steadily to improve the flat rate tax to make it more progressive by urging an increase in the personal exemption. (See LWVIL Constitutional Implementation and Amendments.)

The 1993 LWVIL Convention adopted an action campaign to **reform the state's tax system**, including an initial focus to work for a constitutional amendment for a graduated income tax as a foundation for a more productive tax structure.

The 1995 LWVIL Convention approved the formation of a **Working Committee on State Tax and School Funding Reform**,

reflecting a strong commitment to continued League activity in these areas and the recognition that long-term solutions for school funding will require reform of the state's tax system.

Recent LWVIL Action:

At the 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, and 2015 LWVIL Conventions, League members voted to adopt an action focus on State Fiscal Policy and School Funding for the following two years. To carry out this action focus, LWVIL and local Leagues attended LWVIL Issues Briefings, Lobby Days, and meetings with legislators on the subject. Local Leagues held public forums to educate League members, legislators, and the public on school funding and fiscal policy issues. League members attended rallies in Springfield, wrote letters and emails, and made phone calls to legislators to urge the governor and legislators to pass legislation which would increase state spending on schools and social services and would increase state revenues by raising the income tax, broadening the sales tax, and providing property tax relief.

The 2007-2009 Biennium was a grim time to advocate for change in the way that the state of Illinois raised revenues. Former Governor Blagojevich deadlocked with the General Assembly and very little was accomplished. Governor Quinn and the General Assembly continued the disagreement over how to pay for government and repair the structural deficit. The state continued to ration available funds by delaying payments to schools and social service providers and by postponing payments to the state pension systems. A national recession magnified the state's fiscal problems: state revenues

2009-2011

In 2009, A Will of Convention directed the Board of Directors to call for the Illinois Governor and the General Assembly to restore the state's fiscal health and to provide for Illinois' future.

The LWVIL worked with the Better Funding for Better Schools Coalition to encourage the governor and the General Assembly to change the way the state raises revenues and to spend more money on public schools. In 2009, HB 174 was introduced and the Responsible Budget Coalition, which LWVIL joined, was formed to promote its passage. The RBC later amended its stance to support an HB 174-like bill in the hopes that the legislature could agree on a package without the confines of a particular bill. HB 174 passed the Senate in 2010 but did not pass the House.

2011 The General Assembly successfully passed an income tax increase on a strictly partisan vote which raised the personal income tax from 3% to 5% and corporate tax from 4.8% to 7%. The tax increase was temporary, and in January, 2015, the personal income tax rate dropped to 3.75%, and the tax on corporations dropped to 5.25%. The 2011 legislation did not include expansion of the sales tax or expansion of the Earned Income Tax credit to protect low and moderate income families, changes which the League had promoted.

The Illinois fiscal situation was grim. While Federal stimulus funds initially kept schools and services afloat, when they ended in December, 2010, the state was unable to make up the difference. Despite the additional \$7B expected from the income tax hike, Illinois began FY 2012 with an estimated deficit of \$9 B. Although the state eventually paid its outstanding bills from FY 2009 and 2010, late payments continued. As a member of the Responsible Budget Coalition, the

LWVIL supported “debt restructuring”-- using some of the new tax revenue to back a bond issuance so that the state can back outstanding bills owed to state and local agencies. In addition, LWVIL supported decoupling from the enhanced Federal depreciation program and using the Senate’s revenue estimate as the basis for the FY 2012 budget to help preserve some of the services scheduled to be cut.

2011-2013:

The economy continued to stagnate after the end of the “Great Recession”. State revenues improved because of a temporary tax increase but did not get a boost from an improving economy. The bill for twenty years of deferred pension payments came due and the General Assembly and governor were forced to grapple with the problem. The government continued to face billions in unpaid bills. Spending cuts were forced on school districts and social service and health care providers.

LWVIL continued to work with the Responsible Budget Coalition on ways to improve the state’s revenues. RBC began a campaign called “A Better Illinois” to get the General Assembly to place the question of allowing Illinois to have a graduated rate income tax (GRIT) on the ballot in the November 2014 General Election. LWVIL joined this effort and established a Speakers Bureau to educate citizens on this issue.

To support the work of the Responsible Budget Coalition and further advocate on our own for the needed tax increase, LWVIL asked local Leagues statewide to participate in a simple survey of schools, human service providers, and others who depend on state funding for all or part of their funds to discover the impact on these organizations and their ability to serve their clientele. Each League was then asked to report their findings to their communities, via forum, editorial board meeting, or other method. Numerous

Leagues and their results and follow up action was written into a final report. The Leagues who participated did a remarkable job and should be credited with raising the public’s awareness of the difficulties faced in their communities.

2013-2015

During FY 2014 and the first half of FY 2015, the State of Illinois collected income taxes at the higher “temporary rate”. Approximately 90% of the revenues from the temporary income tax increase were used to pay pension obligations which take \$1 out of every \$4 that the state spends from its General Fund.

Funding state pensions used up much of the new revenue as a consequence of years of inadequate funding because of the pension ramp. Also, changes in actuarial assumptions and losses suffered by the pension funds' investments during the economic downturn contributed to the underfunding. Education and Human Service programs did not receive much new money.

In January 2015, the income tax rates dropped which resulted in a loss of about \$5 billion per year in revenue. The FY 2015 budget did not have enough money to fund programs for the rest of the fiscal year. Governor Rauner and the General Assembly chose to cut programs and spend some unanticipated tax revenues to get through FY2015. The Illinois Supreme court ruled that the Illinois Constitution prohibited changes to state employee pensions and voided a “pension reform” law that was supposed to save money for the state to use elsewhere in the budget.

2015-2017

The Governor and the General Assembly could not agree on budgets for FY2016 and

FY2017. Partial agreements funded elementary and secondary education. Court decrees allowed the State to pay salaries for state employees and some social services. Some programs were funded in response to crises. The state's backlog of unpaid bills grew from \$6 Billion to \$15 Billion. Social service agencies were paid late or not at all. Some agencies were forced to lay off staff and cut programs. Some had to close. Medical bills for state employees were delayed and the backlog of payments to providers grew to \$5 Billion. Community colleges and state universities were not included in the partial budgets, and received emergency payments in smaller than usual amounts. They were left with large holes in their budgets. Students did not receive MAP grants. Many students chose to leave for other states to continue their educations.

The Spring Session of the General Assembly ended on May 31, 2017 without a budget agreement. In July, the General Assembly reached agreement on a budget and a permanent increase in the income tax. The

Governor vetoed the budget and tax increase. The General Assembly overrode the veto. The budget agreement was sufficient for the state to avoid receiving junk bond status by the bond rating agencies. The budget does not have enough revenues to pay for the expenditures in it. Also, the budget does not have sufficient revenues to begin paying down the backlog of unpaid bills..

During all of this time, the League worked to educate its members and the public about these complicated issues. The League advocated for adequate revenues for the state, for education and for health and human services. The state's fiscal problems were the subject of plenary sessions at Issues Briefings, Time for Action requests, questions for legislators at legislative interviews and articles in the E-News. League members did their part and communicated with their elected officials. And the League worked in coalition with the Responsible Budget Coalition, which also advocates for adequate revenues for education and health and human services.

Statement on Gambling: No Cure for State's Fiscal Ills

1999 - Issued by the League of Women Voters Board of Directors

For 20 years, the League, based on our State Fiscal Policy position, has opposed gambling and expansions of gambling as a solution to Illinois' fiscal problems. Gambling distracts attention from the real fiscal problems that Illinois must address which include:

1. A revenue system that is outmoded and structurally flawed because it grows more slowly than the economy and is therefore unable to provide stable funding for state programs and services from one year to the next and
2. A tax structure that unfairly burdens the poor.

The League opposes gambling for the following reasons:

- Gambling revenue is only a small slice of the state revenue pie.
- Gambling revenue has low natural growth potential. It does not contribute to the ability of the state revenue system to capture and reflect long-term economic growth or to provide stable funding for state services and programs.

- Gambling is a regressive approach to raising revenue because it disproportionately impacts those with lower incomes, and does not improve the overall progressivity of Illinois' revenue system.
- Gambling and its various expansions give lawmakers the appearance of working to solve Illinois' fiscal problems but only provide temporary stop-gap measures and an excuse for avoiding long term solutions to Illinois' deteriorating fiscal health.

ACTION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

The strength and integrity of all League action is based on the decisions of informed members. When a position is reached, the League speaks with one voice, the voice of a substantial majority, and the minority abides by that decision. Leagues may, of course, decline to take action at any governmental level and maintain a public silence. **But a League may not take action in opposition to official League positions.** Members may act as individuals in support of or opposition to League positions, but they must make it clear that they are acting on their own behalf and not on behalf of the League unless authorized by the appropriate board to represent the League.

The most effective action occurs when Leagues act at whatever level of government is most appropriate. For example, on a statewide issue, the most effective action occurs when local Leagues, acting in concert, lobby their own state legislators. Because legislators are most responsive to their own constituents, it is rarely effective for a local League to lobby a legislator representing a different area. For this reason, one of the most important criterions in adopting a study is whether the issue can best be addressed at the level of League that would undertake the study.

To ensure agreement on the interpretation of positions, to coordinate activities of the different levels of the League, and to enhance the effectiveness of League action campaigns, local Leagues are encouraged to consult with the state board about their action plans.

Consultation is required whenever:

- 1. The intended action would affect the jurisdiction of other Leagues and/or**
- 2. A local League wishes to act at the state or national level on an issue which has not been the subject of a state or national call to action.**

ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE DECISION TO TAKE ACTION WHICH WILL AFFECT ONLY YOUR COMMUNITY RESTS WITH YOUR LOCAL LEAGUE BOARD. **LOCAL POSITION**

In deciding to take action based on a local position, the board will want to consider:

- whether the contemplated action falls within the relevant position
- whether your members understand and support the action
- whether the action would be effective in your community

STATE, IL OR NATIONAL POSITION

Local Leagues are encouraged to take action in their communities based directly on positions from other levels of League. Consultation with a board member from that League level may be helpful in planning action strategy.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEAGUE POSITION

Issues can arise quickly in a community where League input would be helpful but a lengthy study process leading to a local position is not feasible and there is no applicable position at another level of League. There are a number of ways that local Leagues can help resolve such issues and play a dynamic, visible role in the community. For example, they may:

- bring diverse constituencies together to define the problem and facilitate a common solution
- sponsor public hearings
- provide objective research and education on the community issue
- sponsor educational forums

When the League is involved in a community issue without the basis of a formal position, it is critical that the League representatives remain objective and neutral. The League's role is to help the community reach consensus or air differing viewpoints in a calm, objective atmosphere.

ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD AFFECT THE JURISDICTION OF MORE THAN ONE LEAGUE REQUIRES CONSULTATION WITH THE BOARDS OF THE OTHER LEAGUES IN THE AREA INVOLVED.

The procedure to be followed will depend on the complexity of the issue and the number of Leagues involved. If only two or three Leagues are affected, all should agree (or have no objection) to the plan of action. If more than three Leagues are involved, there should be consensus on the contemplated action. You may contact a member of the state or ILO board for guidance.

ACTION AT THE STATE LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD INVOLVE CONTACT WITH STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REQUIRES APPROVAL BY THE STATE BOARD.

If your League is contemplating state-level action that has not been requested by the LWVIL board, please contact the LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING ONLY THE JURISDICTION(S) OF THE LEAGUE WISHING TO ACT

The contemplated action may be based on positions from any League level and, as a general rule, will be given clearance by the state board. Consultation is needed, however, not only to keep the state board informed about all state-level advocacy but also to ensure that there is no conflict with other LWVIL action and to ensure that the action proposed is based on complete and current information. For example, in the course of a day a bill may be amended one or more times, and the League position may change accordingly. If action is approved, the local League may contact only its own legislators unless it has requested and received permission from other Leagues to lobby their legislators. Such was the case in 1993, when the DuPage County ILO successfully sought approval to lobby all state legislators on legislation relating to the DuPage County Airport Authority.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING JURISDICTIONS BEYOND THOSE OF THE LEAGUE WISHING TO ACT

If the basis for the contemplated action is a state or national position, the state board will evaluate the proposed action in the context of its legislative priorities. Clearance will be given if there is no conflict with other LWVIL action.

If the basis for the contemplated action is a local position, the state board will exercise extreme care in determining whether to approve such action. While using a local position

as the basis for state-level action does not provide the most effective method for action and should not circumvent the state program planning process (through which changes to current state positions or new study items may be proposed), there are occasional circumstances when a local League may wish to pursue such action.

In such cases, the local League will be asked to prepare a request for permission to act to be distributed to all affected Leagues. The request should include a description of the type, goals, impact and time frame of the contemplated action, including which legislators the League proposes to lobby, and to the greatest extent possible, the general effect of the proposed action on other local Leagues. The LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President will review the request prior to distribution. The state board will evaluate the responses of the local Leagues and determine whether to grant permission to act. Points the board will consider include:

- Is the legislation permissive or binding?
- What are the geographic impact, level and visibility of the contemplated action?
- Is the issue divisive at any level?
- Is there conflict with any local, ILO, or state League position?
- Do any local Leagues object to the proposed action and why?

ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD INVOLVE CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL REQUIRES APPROVAL BY THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

If your League is contemplating action at the federal level that has not been requested by the national board, you must clear your plans with LWVUS. You may call the LWVUS office directly. If you have questions, you may contact the appropriate state legislative/issue specialist or the LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President for guidance.

The State and Local League Request Form for Federal Issues/ League of Women Voters is at <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/state-and-local-league-request-form-federal-issues>