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# STUDY & ACTION

GUIDE TO STATE PROGRAM  
**2003 ~ 2004**



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF IOWA

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## FOREWORD

The League of Women Voters adopts programs at the local, state, and national levels and maintains a continuous process of study, consensus, and action. *Study and Action* presents the current state program as adopted by the most recent Convention of the League of Women Voters of Iowa.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVIA support and action has had an impact on governmental improvements and over the years has resulted in these and other accomplishments:

- Successful challenge of a legislative apportionment plan in the Iowa Supreme Court
- Establishment of the Legislative Service Bureau, the Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission, and the Legislative Information Office
- Income tax check-off option
- Substantial revision of the Juvenile Justice Code
- Home Rule for Iowa cities and towns
- Creation of the Iowa Housing Finance Authority
- Establishment of the Area Education Agencies
- Passage of:
  - Open Meetings Law
  - Land Use Legislation
  - Beverage Container Deposit Law
  - Urban Revitalization Bill
  - Extension of Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - School Reapportionment Legislation
  - Groundwater Bill
- Defeat of a constitutional convention ballot issue
- Ratification of the DC Voting Rights Amendment

## POSITION STATEMENTS

All League action at the state level is based on the position statements that follow, together with the principles of the League of Women Voters and portions of the LWVUS program.

The positions were reached by separate studies over many years and are reviewed and readopted or dropped by convention action. In order to effectively understand the positions and to take action, we have classified the positions under headings.

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

## PRINCIPLES

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

## *TABLE OF CONTENTS*

### **LWVIA PROGRAM 2002**

#### *GOVERNMENT*

##### *STATE GOVERNMENT*

<b>The Constitution</b>	<b>1</b>
Constitutional Convention	3
Equal Rights Amendment	4
<b>Apportionment</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>State Budget Process</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Iowa General Assembly</b>	<b>8</b>

##### *LOCAL GOVERNMENT*

<b>Structure, Function, and Finance</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Area Education Agencies</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>County Home Rule</b>	<b>12</b>

##### *FISCAL POLICY*

<b>Iowa Tax System</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Municipal Finance</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>School Finance</b>	<b>17</b>

##### *JUSTICE*

<b>Rehabilitation of Alcoholic Offenders</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Capital Punishment</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Sentencing and Corrections</b>	<b>24</b>

##### *NATURAL RESOURCES*

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>26</b>
-----------------	-----------

### **LWVUS PROGRAM-ACTION IN IOWA**

#### *GOVERNMENT*

<b>Citizen Rights</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>DC Self-Government and Full Representation</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Election Process</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Campaign Finance</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Gun Control</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Voting Rights</b>	<b>32</b>

##### *INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS*

<b>Trade</b>	<b>33</b>
--------------	-----------

##### *SOCIAL POLICY*

<b>Child Care</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Early Intervention for Children At Risk</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Equal Access - Education, Employment, &amp; Housing</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Equal Rights</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Health Care</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Income Assistance</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Urban Policy</b>	<b>36</b>

##### *NATURAL RESOURCES*

<b>Resource Management</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Environmental Protection &amp; Pollution Control</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Public Participation</b>	<b>37</b>

<b>POSITIONS DROPPED FROM LWVIA PROGRAM</b>	<b>38</b>
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## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive to all citizens and that protects individual liberties established under the Constitution.*

### STATE GOVERNMENT

#### THE CONSTITUTION

*Position in Brief: Support for a constitution that provides a framework for state government and deals only with major and enduring concerns while safeguarding individual rights.*

#### History

The Iowa Constitution has been the object of League study several times, beginning in 1955. Reapportionment, the judicial and executive branches, and the legislative branch were studied between 1955-1962. In 1964, consensus was reached to support a civil-service system for nonprofessional state employees. Acting on the constitution position, League has opposed attempts to amend the Iowa Constitution to require a balanced budget or to limit growth. It also opposed the amendment (which took effect in 1984) that allows for legislative veto of administrative rules. In 1996, the League opposed a constitutional amendment restricting the use of revenues from hunting and fishing licenses (ratified 1996).

LWVIA continues to oppose the Stanley Amendment (a.k.a. Taxpayers' Rights Amendment) on the basis it would severely limit revenue growth and spending for all levels of government--school, city, county and state. (See Home Rule position for additional information on opposition to the Stanley Amendment.) LWVIA has been a member of a coalition opposed to this amendment, Coalition to Protect Iowa's Constitution, since 1993. The coalition includes the Iowa League of Cities; Iowa State Association of Counties; AFSCME~ ISEA; Iowa Association of School Boards; Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities; Iowa Conference of Teamsters; School Administrators of Iowa; Iowa Citizen Action Network; Iowa PTA and Iowa State Police Association.

A special election was held in June 1999 to vote on a constitutional amendment that would have limited revenue growth and spending. LWVIA opposed the amendment and it was defeated.

- LWVIA has supported constitutional amendments for:
  - judicial selections and tenure (ratified 1962)
  - constitutional convention proposals to be submitted to voters for ratification (ratified 1964)
  - annual sessions of the legislature (ratified 1968)
  - municipal home rule (ratified 1968)
  - item veto on appropriation bills (ratified 1968)
  - provisions for reapportionment (ratified 1968)
  - legislature to set own compensation (ratified 1968)
  - single-member legislative districts (ratified 1970)

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**The Constitution (continued)**

- four-year terms for governor and lieutenant governor (ratified 1972) -
- provision for removal of unfit judges (ratified 1972)
- repeal of prohibition against lotteries (ratified 1972)
- legislature given power to call itself into special session (ratified 1974)
- repeal allocation of county fines to school districts or libraries (ratified 1974) -
- county home rule (ratified 1978)
- election of governor and lieutenant governor as a team (ratified 1988)
- state ERA (ratified 1998)
- 

**League-supported provisions not adopted:**

- short ballot (appointment of other state officials)
- bipartisan, non-legislative, reapportionment commission

***LWVIA Position (1971, 1981)***

*The Constitution of Iowa should guarantee protection of people in their rights, delineate the framework of state government, and provide for only major concerns of enduring importance.*

*A good constitution should:*

- ★ *assure separation and balance among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, clarifying lines of authority and responsibility;*
- ★ *leave procedural and financial specifics to statutory law;*
- ★ *be stated in broad terms to provide for adaptation to changing conditions;*
- ★ *be consistent throughout;*
- ★ *avoid conflict with the federal constitution or laws; and*
- ★ *be free of deadwood, reasonably concise, and easy to understand*

## CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

*Position in Brief: Support for statutory implementation that provides for an adequately funded constitutional convention of determinate length and indeterminate scope with delegates elected from districts on a nonpartisan basis.*

### History

Provisions of the Iowa Constitution require that a call for a constitutional convention be on the ballot every ten years. In 1960, a convention was seen as the only means of correcting mal-apportionment of the General Assembly, and LWVIA worked unsuccessfully for passage of a convention call. In the early 1960s, the problem was resolved by the U. S. Supreme Court decisions. In 1970, the League took no position.

In response to an active campaign in the late 1970s promoting a constitutional convention to adopt an amendment placing fiscal limits on local governments, LWVIA studied the adequacy of the Iowa Constitution and constitutional conventions held in other states, and opposed a convention call in 1980. An intense campaign involving speeches, printed materials, lapel buttons, guest editorials, letters to the editor, and radio debate led to the defeat of the ballot issue. Believing League members at the end of the decade should decide the need for a convention at that time, LWVIA dropped the portion of the position that opposed a convention call. Provisions for the implementing legislation were left in the position.

In 1990 members were updated on League's "con-con" history, but no constitutional convention was called. The League did not get involved in the issue in 2000.

### **LWVIA Position (1980)**

*If the General Assembly considers implementing legislation for a constitutional convention, LWVIA will support measures to:*

- *provide adequate funds;*
- *require delegates to be qualified voters elected on a nonpartisan basis from districts;*
- *limit the length but not the scope of convention proceedings; and*
- *provide for a preparatory commission prior to convening; and locate the convention*
- *in the capital city.*

*Action to oppose the placing of provisions for a constitutional study commission in the constitution.*

**IOWA EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT*****L WVIA Position (1981)***

*Action to support an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Iowa Constitution and to bring the State Code into compliance with the goals of the Equal Rights Amendment.*

**History**

Based on the LWVUS Human Resources (now Social Policy) Equal Rights position, LWVIA supported passage of an Iowa ERA in 1978. The Amendment passed both houses for the first time in that year, and in 1979 it was passed by the next General Assembly. It appeared on the ballot for voter ratification in November 1980. League members throughout the state gave

speeches, raised money, provided printed materials, and participated actively in a coalition whose goal was passage of the Iowa ERA. The Iowa ERA was defeated in the 1980 election.

LWVIA continues to work "to bring the State Code into compliance with the goals of the Equal Rights Amendment." The above position was adopted by the LWVIA convention in 1981. The effort actually started in 1922 when a program item was "State Constitution to be amended to allow women to serve in the legislature." In 1936, the item was "Opposition to all discrimination in public employment based on sex or marital status."

In February 1984, the state of Iowa was the first in the nation to complete the 1/50 States Project," a word-by-word review of the *Iowa Code* to detect unequal treatment on the basis of gender. Some recommended changes were enacted in 1984. In 1985 the remaining 1/50 States Project" recommendations for *Code* revisions were an L WVIA legislative priority. With the exception of insurance, most of the major recommended changes were adopted. One highlight was the elimination of absolute veterans preference. For many years, local governments were required to give absolute preference to qualified veterans applying for municipal employment. The practice effectively kept qualified women out of the most desirable positions.. LWVIA published *VETERANS ... "shall be given the preference "*, (pub #8306, Feb. 1983), participated in a coalition, lobbied actively on the bill, and celebrated an important victory after many years and hundreds of hours of lobbying.

The first day of the 1991 legislative session, League took action, which resulted in successful passage of the ERA amendment, moving it to the ballot. An amendment campaign became a League priority for the next 18 months. The Iowa ERA was defeated in the 1992 election.

A new equal rights amendment which would simply add the words "and women" to the Iowa Constitution passed two sessions of the Iowa General Assembly and was on the ballot in 1998. It passed.



## APPORTIONMENT

**Position in Brief:** *Support for the redistricting of state and local electoral districts every ten years, based on population.*

### History

LWVIA supported the 1968 constitutional amendment for redistricting and the 1970 amendment requiring single-member districts. In 1971 when the legislature attempted to reapportion itself: L WVIA joined other organizations in a suit that challenged the equity of the plan. The Iowa Supreme Court agreed that the plan was unacceptable and drew up its own legislative redistricting plan.

LWVIA uses these guidelines for judging redistricting bills: both houses of the legislature apportioned on population; single-member districts; and crossing county lines permissible in the formation of equitable districts.

In 1979 the legislature assigned redistricting to the Legislative Service Bureau. The legislature turned down the first two plans submitted. L WVIA had actively supported both plans and also supported Plan III, which the legislature adopted. during a special session in August 1981.

Following the 1980 census an LWVIA study of local statutory provisions for redistricting uncovered the fact that many Iowa school districts did not feel bound by redistricting statutes. A League survey of all the state's school districts uncovered much mal-apportionment. Most school districts had not redrawn their director districts for decades. Some districts had methods of representation that could not be found in the *Iowa Code*. In 1983 LWVIA succeeded in encouraging passage of a law that requires school districts to redistrict their director districts after every federal census.

Our 1991 legislative priority was to work for fair redistricting of state and local electoral districts, including support for: districts based on equal population, single-member districts, those that crossed county lines and districts that divided large cities rather than small towns. The state board later expanded the priority to include equal representation in county supervisor districts.

Due to population change, Iowa lost one congressional district.

Following release of the first proposed redistricting plan, the Temporary Redistricting Advisory Commission scheduled three public hearings. League was the only organization to testify at all three.

Plan 1 passed both houses and was signed by the governor on May 30, 1991. Iowa became the first state, following the 1990 census, to pass a plan for both congressional and legislative redistricting.

Based on compactness of districts, L WVIA testified in support of Plan 1 at two of the three public hearings in 2001.

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**Apportionment (continued)**

***LWVIA Position*** (1956, 1963, 1979, 1981, 1991, 2001)

*Action to support:*

- ★ *redistricting of all state and local electoral districts based substantially on equal population;*
- ★ *redistricting of the Iowa General Assembly every ten years by a non-legislative redistricting authority;*
- ★ *anti-gerrymandering provisions in redistricting procedures*

## STATE BUDGET PROCESS

***Position in Brief:*** Support for use of generally accepted accounting principles, strategic planning, and systematic review.

### History

At the 1991 LWVIA Convention, it was proposed that a 10-year study of state government be undertaken, with a different focus each year. The delegates adopted the first year of the study with the focus to be determined by the State Board. The State Board selected a focus on the state budget process.

The 1992 L WVIA Convention delegates adopted a continuation of the state budget study as it was felt more time was needed for a thorough study.

Concurrence on the state budget position was reached in February 1993.

### ***LWVIA Position (1993)***

- *The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports the following policies related to the state budget process:*
- *Generally accepted accounting principles. (GAAP) should be used in the budget process and in all state budget reports and revenue projections.*
- *A State general fund cash reserve should be implemented and maintained, except in extraordinary circumstances as provided by law.*
- *An economic emergency fund should be established and maintained.*
- *The Governor and the General Assembly should use the December 15 revenue estimates of the Revenue Estimating. Conference in the budget process. If the estimates are later revised, action on the budget should reflect the lower of the two estimates.*

### ***The League of Women Voters of Iowa believes:***

- ★ *All three branches of state government; executive, legislative and judicial-should be required to engage in strategic planning.*
- ★ *A system management review should he created for all programs and functions of state government. A system of review of tax sources should be created.*
- ★ *Such systems should operate on a cycle to guarantee regular, periodic review, and criteria should be established for the evaluation process.*

## **IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

***Position in Brief: Support for the bicameral legislature with six-year terms for State Senators and four-year terms for State Representatives.***

### **History**

The 1993 LWVIA Convention delegates supported a continuation of the state government study with a focus on the Iowa General Assembly.

The 1994 Convention adopted a continuation of the study of the Iowa General Assembly.

The position has been used in subsequent legislative sessions to oppose legislation calling for term limits of State Senators and State Representatives.

### **LWVIA Position (1995)**

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports the present structure of the Iowa General Assembly.\**

*The League opposes term limits for State Representatives and State Senators. The League believes that certain changes in legislative processes could improve the system and the end product.*

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**

- 1) *The number and function of the committees should be the same in both the House and Senate.*
- 2) *Interim committees could be more effective if the legislature responded to the work of the committees, if more citizens and resource people were used, and if standing committees were used during the interim.*
- 3) *Conference committees should be required to adhere to the rules of other committees.*

### **BUDGETING**

*Biennial budgeting with annual review is preferable to annual budgeting. Biennial budgeting would encourage greater long range planning, require more accurate financial forecasting, and provide greater stability in funding programs. Whether budgeting is done annually or biennially, the League believes that the budget making and budget review processes should be streamlined.*

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports the current "funnel" system of moving legislation through the session.*

*The League further believes that three groups have the greatest influence on legislation: lobbyists, political action committees, and the business community. Public interest groups, the Legislative Fiscal and Service Bureaus, and caucus staffs have a moderate impact on legislation, while individuals have the least influence.*

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\* A bicameral legislature of 150 members (a 50-member Senate and a 100-member House); and annual sessions of 110 days (odd-numbered years) and 100 days (even-numbered years).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### STRUCTURE, FUNCTION, AND FINANCE

*Position in Brief: Support for city and county home rule and for greater local flexibility and intergovernmental cooperation.*

#### History

In the early 1960s, as an outgrowth of an LWVIA study of state government, members became concerned about Iowa's intergovernmental relations, *i. e.*, the ways local, state, and federal governments interrelated in structure, function, and financing. The study had revealed overlap, duplication, and inflexibility in local government, with the state legislating on most of the important matters of concern to cities and counties.

The authority of cities and towns over their own affairs had long been interpreted as being restricted to those powers specifically granted by the legislature. Responding to trends that indicated the need for broader municipal authority, the General Assembly adopted municipal home rule in 1963, but the court declared it unconstitutional. If change were to take place it would need to come through the constitutional amendment process.

In 1965 LWVIA adopted a position supporting a constitutional amendment granting home rule to Iowa cities. In 1968 the amendment was ratified by the voters and withstood a court test of its constitutionality in 1975. The League also successfully supported the municipal code of 1972 that was the implementing legislation for home rule for cities.

In 1969 LWVIA began a study of county and regional government and in 1971 reached consensus in support of measures to increase flexibility, to minimize duplication of services in local units of government, to increase area-wide planning, and to strengthen inter local cooperation.

Subsequently the position was used (and is still used) to support legislation to establish regional agencies, including regional libraries and the area educational agencies; to authorize consolidation of counties, establishment of metropolitan service corporations, combination of county offices, mutual benefit contracts among public agencies under Chapter 28E of the *Code of Iowa*, and consolidation of several county funds; and to modernize county finance procedures.

In 1976 League members decided to focus study on related issues and examined the following: financing of city, county, and regional governmental units with special attention to local-option taxation for cities and counties; state aid to cities; county home rule; and problems arising from the interface of local units of government. Out of these studies, two new positions were adopted -- County Home Rule and Municipal Finance.

In 1982 the League supported the establishment of the Iowa Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR).

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## Structure, Function, and Finance (continued)

Also in 1982 LWVIA updated its members on this position, giving them background information as well as information on the status of local-government restructuring. (1982 *Update--Local Government: Structure, Function and Finance*, pub # 8213, Nov. 1982).

In 1983 LWVIA worked for passage of legislation that changed many procedures used in county finance.

LWVIA used this position in 1999 to oppose the Stanley Amendment because it would place limits on spending and revenue growth on local governments. It was defeated in a special election that year.

In 2002 this position continues to be used to support local control of zoning of agricultural enterprises such as hog confinement facilities.

### ***LWVIA Position (1965, 1971, 1977, 1979, 1982)***

#### ***Action to:***

- ★ *implement home rule for Iowa cities, counties and joint city-county units of government (including local-option taxation authority);*
- ★ *minimize duplication of services;*
- ★ *increase area-wide and city-county planning;*
- ★ *strengthen inter-local cooperation;*
- ★ *increase flexibility of local units of government; and*
- ★ *defeat property tax limitation*

## AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES

*Position in Brief: Support for partially state-supported regional agencies to supplement and complement educational programs offered by local districts so that the goal of equal opportunity is enhanced*

### History

Having worked for the creation of the Area Education Agencies (AEAs) in 1974 under its position on municipal, county, and regional/area government, LWVIA decided to study AEAs in detail during 1977-1979.

Under pressure from the U.S. Congress for all states to provide special education programs for all children by 1978, Iowa passed AEA legislation that took effect July 1, 1975. Prior to this time 52 various and uncoordinated (some were joint-county) boards in Iowa were trying to meet the needs of children with special educational problems, but they reached only 7-8 percent of such children.

The new legislation replaced the county boards with 15 intermediate service units (AEAs) to serve the local school systems in Iowa.

After studying the structure and financing of AEAs, League members reached consensus and in 1979 adopted a support position that is similar to the one now in place. In 1985 a committee reviewed the position and presented background and update information to the membership. Through a concurrence process a slightly reworded position statement was adopted: equal opportunity to quality education was affirmed; support for media and education services and programs was strengthened; the concept of in service programs was incorporated; and the funding plank was reworded to be consistent with the LWVIA position statement on the Iowa Tax System

### ***LWVIA Position (1979, 1985)***

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa believes that the state should provide equal opportunity for each child in Iowa to receive quality education. To this end, we support AEAs as service agencies to local school districts. Action to support:*

- *media and education services and programs as needed and requested, plus the required special education services;*
- *assistance to local school districts by AEAs for talented and gifted programs, preferably through a weighted funding formula;*
- *in service programs and services by AEAs that do not duplicate programs and services already available through other school corporations;*
- *funding of AEAs through a combination of property taxes, state aid, and grants, with a higher proportion of the budget funded by state aid rather than property taxes;*
- *selection of AEA board members at district conventions of local school boards;*
- *no regulatory or taxing powers assigned to AEAs.*

*If the legislature grants taxing authority to the AEAs, board members should be selected by direct election, reside in the district represented, and be chosen by the electors of that district.*

## COUNTY HOME RULE

*Position in Brief: Support for broader county self-rule and for greater variety of county government structures and forms.*

### History

With municipal home rule in place and its constitutionality upheld by the courts in 1975, LWVIA turned its attention to county home rule in 1976.

Although, county and county-like governments predate the U. S. Constitution, the concept of county government found its legitimacy as a creation of state law that viewed the county as a quasi-municipal corporation to administer state policy, Iowa counties were and are an integral part of state government and until recently had only that authority granted by the General Assembly. For years Iowa adhered to the Dillon Rule, named for Associate Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court John F. Dillon, who in 1886 explicitly defined counties as "involuntary political or civil divisions of the State, created ... to aid in the administration of government."

Trends during the 1960s and 1970s encouraged efforts to remove county governments from the legal restrictions imposed by the state legislature and to modernize county governments. Urbanization, increased local service expectations, changing federal and state regulations, and diversified county characteristics have contributed to the impetus to give counties greater powers of self-determination and opportunities for regional cooperation.

LWVIA completed its study and arrived at consensus in support of county home rule in 1977. Immediately thereafter, LWVIA actively supported the constitutional amendment and the implementing legislation. In November 1978, Iowa voters ratified the amendment. Implementing legislation was enacted by the 1981 legislature.

The county home rule position also provided the foundation for LWVIA work on legislation that authorized a charter commission for Polk County ... (1982 *Update=Local Government: Structure, Function and Finance*, pub #8213, November 1982).

League was one of the main sponsors of government consolidation legislation in 1991.

LWVIA used this position in 1999 to oppose and defeat the Stanley Amendment because it would place limits on spending and revenue growth on local governments.

In 2000, and again in 2001, LWVIA worked to defeat property tax limitation bills.

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## County Home Rule (continued)

### ***LWVIA Position (1977, 1982)***

*Action to support home rule for Iowa Counties with constitutional and statutory measures providing for:*

- *authorization for local governments to combine (county-county and city-county with voter determination of the county seat);*
- *provisions for optional county and city-county charters;*
- *bonding authority;*
- *local-option tax authority subject to reverse referendum;*
- *provision that the power of a city should prevail in the event of a conflict between a county and a city.*

*Implementing legislation should include:*

- ★ *a variety of methods for creating joint local governments;*
- ★ *referendum procedures for approving, amending, and dissolving joint local governments;*
- ★ *a variety of methods for initiating a charter procedure;*
- ★ *proportional representation and specified minimum size for charter commissions;*
- ★ *referendum procedures for adopting, amending, and rescinding charters; and*
- ★ *periodic review*

## FISCAL POLICY

*Promote a sound economy and an equitable and flexible system of taxation.*

### IOWA TAX SYSTEM:

*Position in Brief: Support for an equitable and flexible system of taxation that is progressive overall and provides adequate yield of revenue.*

#### History

LWVIA members reached consensus in 1972 on the criteria by which a tax should be evaluated. A 1973 study of property tax called for changing the proportion of revenue raised by the three main taxes: income, sales, and property taxes. Specific positions on sales and income taxes were added in 1974. *A Taxing Subject* (LWVIA pub #7612) was published in 1976. It was updated with an addendum in 1981.

A 1982 update led to consensus on earmarking; *Tax Earmarking in Iowa* (pub #8211) was published by LWVIA in October of 1982. An addendum came out in 1983.

LWVIA has achieved several goals of its Iowa Tax System position. The state has assumed the county's share of welfare support, phased out the personal property tax, and removed the sales tax on food and prescription drugs. The legislature also granted property-tax relief for low-income elderly and disabled home owners and renters, raising the eligibility limits in 1974, 1975, 1976, and 1979. In 1975 a progressive income tax for the higher-income brackets was enacted.

In 1980 the League successfully worked against a ballot issue calling for a constitutional convention to set spending limits.

A state tax study was mandated by the legislature in 1984. The League presented testimony concluding with this statement: "The study of Iowa's taxes should help the legislature review current taxes and should form the basis for future tax laws, free of accusations of unfairness, obscurity, or favoritism"

In 1987 a major tax-reform movement in the state was precipitated by federal income-tax reform the previous year. LWVIA supported a bill calling for coupling the state's income, franchise, and death taxes with those of the federal government. The League also called for adequate funding of the social-services/human-needs budgets and programs as well as for adequate funds for protection of natural resources.

In 1988 a program review committee reviewed the position, edited and presented changes, with which the membership concurred.

In 1990 Leagues concurred with wording regarding user fees or payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTS) proposed by LWVMDM, and the approved wording was added to our Property Tax position.

(continued next page)

**Iowa Tax System (continued)*****LWVIA Position (1973, 1974, 1975, 1983, 1988, 1990)***

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports all equitable and flexible system of taxation. A tax should be evaluated primarily on equity, taxpayers' ability to pay and adequate yield. A tax should be evaluated secondarily on the size of the tax base, ease of payment and collection, ease of understanding for the taxpayer, flexibility, and a balance between stability and elasticity.*

***INCOME TAX:*** *The League advocates a progressive income tax and believes that any increase in state tax revenue preferably should be through income tax, rather than sales or property tax.*

***SALES TAX:*** *The League advocates moderating the regresiveness of the sales tax.*

***PROPERTY TAX:*** *The League believes that local revenues should depend less on property tax and more on state funds. Property tax should be decreased also by reduction in the number of local governmental units. Property tax relief should be granted to low-income elderly and other low-income owners and renters. Property tax exemptions should be removed from income-producing property of churches, profit-making nursing homes, veterans' organizations, fraternal organizations, and labor unions. Cities should be allowed to impose user fees or payments-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOTS) on tax-exempt properties for services rendered to those properties. Cities should be allowed to charge county, state and federally-owned properties for the city services provided to those properties.*

***EARMARKING:***

*When consistent with other League criteria, earmarking of funds is an acceptable fiscal policy.*

***CORPORATE TAX:*** *The League urges a tax treatment for business that would provide equity of imposition and enforcement between in-state and out-of-state corporations. Changes to achieve equity should reinforce the economic stability of the state and provide a favorable climate for business.*

***TAX INCENTIVES:*** *The League supports fair incentives for efforts and programs to slow the growth in energy consumption, to encourage development of renewable energy resources, and to maximize energy conservation.*

## MUNICIPAL FINANCE

*Position in Brief: Support for a wide range of local ... option taxes as a means of broadening the sources of revenue available to Iowa cities.*

### History

The study of municipal finance was an extension of a 1969 study of county and regional government. *Municipal Financing for Iowa: A Study Guide*, pub #754, was published in 1975. A position was reached in 1976.

In 1979 L WVIA supported legislation allowing cities to tax hotel/motel accommodations. League was successful in support of the Urban Revitalization Bill, a legislative priority in 1979. The bill granted tax exemptions for renovation work on residential, commercial, and industrial property in areas designated by city government for revitalization.

The position was updated in 1983.

LWVIA supports local option sales taxes and local leagues have used this position in support of various local option tax votes.

### ***LWVL4 Position (1976)***

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports a wide range of local-option taxes as a means of broadening the sources of revenue available to Iowa cities including: retail sales tax (with the present legal exceptions), hotel/motel accommodations, food/beverage served at commercial establishments, and cigarettes.*

*Local-option taxation should be subject to a reverse referendum by the voters.*

*The League opposes any increase in the \$8.10/\$1000 maximum city property tax levy. While local-option taxation may make reductions possible, in local property taxes; the League opposes any legislative requirement that a specified portion of the funds raised by local-option taxes must be used to reduce property taxes.*

*The League supports an increase in the cities' share of the Road Use Fund as well as legislative study of means to reduce further municipal dependence on the property tax.*

*The League supports consideration of present inequities related to the taxation of business and industry, nonprofit organizations, and agricultural land within city limits; increasing and stabilizing the aid from the Municipal Assistance Fund; and increasing the proportion of liquor profits returnable to cities.*

## SCHOOL FINANCE

*Position in Brief: Support of a state school-funding program that will provide equal opportunity for each child in Iowa to receive a quality education.*

### History

The rising costs of education, coupled with severe declines in school district enrollments prompted the League to question the adequacy of the Iowa Foundation Program, the method of financing public schools in Iowa adopted in 1972 by the legislature. The study resulted in endorsement of the Iowa Foundation Plan, underscoring the position that the state of Iowa should continue to substantially support public schools with state aid rather than an increased dependence on property tax. The position was reached in 1981.

Action on the position began immediately with the League presenting testimony against a school funding bill to the House Education Committee in February 1981. The bill called for a freeze of the state's contribution to the foundation base for two years and also lowered the rate of allowable growth. Despite the efforts of the League and other educational groups, the bill became a law.

In 1982 LWVIA published *School Finance: The Foundation Plan. A Guide Through the Code* (pub #821).

The concept of tuition tax credits or deductions has been included in various education bills since 1984. The League regards this concept as a threat to equal access to education and continues to oppose bills including tuition tax credits or deductions.

During the 1996 legislative session the tuition tax credit was increased to \$100 per year. In response to a call from supporters for a much larger increase during the 1997 session, LWVIA formed Iowans in Support of Public Education, a coalition of organizations opposed to tuition tax credits.

The 1988 Convention adopted a revised school finance position. In the fall, a state committee studied proposed plans to change the current school foundation formula. They presented background and rationale to the membership. Consensus was reached in early 1989 and we effectively lobbied for a school formula revision.

### *LWVIA Position (1981, 1989)*

*The League believes that the state should provide equal opportunity for each child in Iowa to receive a quality education regardless of the property wealth of the local school district. To this end, the League supports a state school-funding program that provides a minimum spending level for every child in Iowa funded by a combination of state aid and local property taxes.*

*The League believes that the school-funding formula should be designed to generate adequate revenue and to preserve the overall fairness of the state's tax structure. The state should give substantial support to public schools with state aid but should not provide full funding.*

(continued next page)

## School Finance (continued)

### ***The League supports:***

- ★ *the funding of local school district budgets with a larger proportion of state aid and a smaller proportion of local property taxes;*
- ★ *the use of various factors to calculate the budgets of local school districts; for instance, enrollment, average per-pupil costs, and unique needs or other special circumstances;*
- ★ *the allocation of additional funds on a per-pupil basis to meet the needs of special education, gifted, and at-risk students;*
- ★ *the option for local school districts to supplement their budgets within state-determined limits and to allocate funds in a locally determined manner; and*
- ★ *the use of fiscal incentives that encourage school-district sharing of services to increase flexibility, educational opportunity, and overall economy.*

### ***The League opposes:***

- *increased reliance on local property taxes to support the budgets of local school districts.*

## JUSTICE

*Promote fair treatment by guaranteeing the rights of all individuals.*

## REHABILITATION OF ALCOHOLIC AND OTHER DRUG ADDICTED OFFENDERS

*Position in Brief- Seek successful measures to rehabilitate alcoholic and other drug addicted offenders through treatment programs and support facilities.*

### History

Delegates to the 1983 L WVIA convention adopted a two-year study of the Adult Corrections System, with direction to examine the areas of parole, sentencing, facilities, and alternatives to sentencing. A League study guide, *Iowa's Prison Terms: A Study of Sentencing and Parole in Iowa* (pub #8314), was prepared. The first year of the study provided a broad, general overview of the system. Sentencing, punishment, parole, and the discretionary powers of the criminal system were a part of the second year.

Members did not reach consensus on the study, and at the 1985 convention the L WVIA board recommended dropping it from the program. However, it was adopted as a not-recommended program item, with delegate direction to the board to appoint a committee to obtain funding and cancel the study if unable to find funding. Funding came from the local Leagues and other sources.

A study guide, *Iowa's Adult Corrections Study, Part III, Alcoholism and the Criminal Justice System*, (pub #8601, Sept. 1986) was prepared. Consensus was reached in 1986. The position was renamed from Iowa's Adult Corrections System to the current name in 1988.

The 2003 L WVIA Convention approved recommended editorial updates of this position to ensure that terminology in the position reflects the wide range of addictions other than alcohol that frequently affect 21 st Century criminal offenders.

### LWVIA Position (1986, 1988, 2003)

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa recognizes that there is a difference of opinion as to the definition, cause, and treatment of alcohol and other drug abuse and that success of treatment for addictions is limited, even with a willing client in a supportive environment.*

*The League of Women Voters of Iowa supports:*

- ★ *measures which, in addition to protecting the community, seek to rehabilitate addicted offenders;*
- ★ *separate housing for addicted offenders;*
- ★ *licensed addiction treatment programs that:*
  - ✓ *recognize uniform definitions of success and a means of measuring it,*
  - ✓ *are monitored and reviewed periodically for positive results and cost effectiveness,*
  - ✓ *are improved whenever new verifiable data are obtained that indicate need for change.*

*As an immediate step toward the accomplishment of these goals, the League recommends the formation of a taskforce made up of service providers, corrections professionals, and the public to discuss and reach agreement on methods of treatment, definition of success, means of measuring success, cost accountability, and methods of licensing and monitoring treatment programs for alcohol and other drug addicted offenders.*

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

**Position in Brief:** *Opposition to capital punishment and its reinstatement in Iowa.*

### History

The 1995 L WVIA Convention, delegates approved a study of capital punishment in Iowa. The Ottumwa and Grinnell Leagues conducted the study and took consensus. Concurrence was reached by a ten to one margin.

Based on this position, L WVIA successfully opposed death penalty legislation in 1997.

### LWVIA Position (1997)

- *The League of Women Voters of Iowa opposes capital punishment and its reinstatement in Iowa.*
- *There is no conclusive evidence that capital punishment is a deterrent - a correlation between the murder rate and the death penalty is not apparent in those states which have it .*
- *The death penalty has a disproportionate impact on minorities and the poor and is enforced with prejudice.*
- *The death penalty is irreversible, and innocent people are known to have been executed in the past.*
- *The costs of execution are higher than those of life imprisonment without parole. ...;{ Life imprisonment without parole is a sufficiently harsh sentence.*
- *It is morally untenable for the state to take a life. Institutionalized killing is inhumane and contributes to a climate of violence.*

*In the event that capital punishment becomes law, in Iowa:*

- ★ *There should be a minimum age of 21 at which an offender is subject to the death penalty.*
- ★ *Insanity and mental retardation should be considered mitigating factors.*
- ★ *Special provisions should be made for the appointment of competent counsel capital cases.*
- ★ *There should be no restrictions placed on access to the appeals process.*
- ★ *Guarantees should be in place to counteract the effects of prejudice, to provide for automatic review of evidence and trial procedure, and to insure that the penalty is appropriate for the offense.*



## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND THE WELFARE OF JUVENILES

*Position in Brief- League supports a multiple approach to juvenile delinquent behavior including emphasis on prevention programs, juvenile justice system procedures, and an increase in juvenile justice system treatment options, including restorative justice programs and principles.*

### History

LWVIA began the study of the Iowa juvenile system in 1973, continued the study with emphasis on the juvenile code, and in 1975 reached consensus on several principles concerning the treatment of juveniles. LWVIA lobbied and worked for substantial revision of the juvenile justice section of the *Code of Iowa*.

In 1976 the position was broadened to support combining family-related problems into a family division within the Iowa District Court. In 1979 the District Court-Family Division was announced as a separate position. The Iowa legislature passed an extensive revision of Iowa's juvenile laws, effective July 1979, that contained precise definitions and procedures for dealing with the juvenile from intake to adjudication and detention. The League and the Iowa State Extension Service cosponsored a series of community meetings to explain and gain acceptance for the *Code* revisions.

The League and the PTA jointly prepared, *An Educator's Guide to the Juvenile Code* and, in 1981, sponsored workshops for educators and parents.

The position was updated in 1983 and distributed in a publication: *Parents, Children and Juvenile Law-Update*.

The position was studied and updated in 1988 by the Program Review Committee. The revised position was adopted at the 1989 State Convention.

Again in 1999 an updated position, recommending a more comprehensive approach to juvenile delinquent behavior, was adopted by the State Convention after a state study culminated in a consensus by local leagues.

### LWVIA Position (1975, 1976, 1979, 1983, 1989, 1999)

*LWVIA supports a community approach to the prevention of Juvenile delinquent behavior by advocating the use of public and private resources to:*

- ◀ *Encourage the development of healthy and nurturing families*
- ◀ *assure safety for children in their communities*
- ◀ *facilitate the positive attachment of children to their families and their schools/education*
- ◀ *encourage children in the formation of positive peer relations*
- ◀ *reward children's healthy lifestyle choices*

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## **Juvenile Justice and the Welfare of Juveniles (continued)**

*LWVIA supports a community response to juvenile delinquent behavior that advocates the use of public and private resources to:*

- *Establish and adequately fund a wide variety of treatment options to address children's underlying or contributing problems such as alcoholism, drug addiction" suicidal tendencies, illiteracy, etc.;*
- *encourage coordination among treatment agencies; and*
- *incorporate restorative justice principles wherever possible.*

***LWVIA supports a juvenile court system that incorporates the following principles:***

- *Retains juveniles charged with status offenses, but in a category separate from delinquency;*
- *maintains the confidentiality of Children Need of Assistance Petitions and status offense records;*
- *includes a requirement for special training/or police and court personnel in handling juvenile matters;*
- *permits the establishment of family courts, peer courts and community court where feasible;*
- *allows offenses other than felony crimes against a person to be expunged;*
- *maintains a system of graduated responses to delinquent behavior based on number of prior offenses, severity of instant offense, and age .at time of offense; and*
- *incorporates restorative justice principles into every appropriate stage of the juvenile justice system.*

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*Position in Brief: The League of Women Voters of Iowa finds the need for several changes in providing legal and social support services for victims of domestic violence, including a review of existing penalties for perpetrators, and working for more consistent enforcement of present laws.*

### History

The 1999 LWVIA Convention adopted Domestic Violence as a study contingent on funding. A study committee was formed and study materials prepared and sent to the local Leagues without cost to LWVIA. The 2000 Convention voted to continue the study. During the 2001 Convention, the delegates accepted the position as printed in the convention workbook.

In 2001 LWVIA joined the *Iowa Coalition for Sensible Gun Laws*; based on our Domestic Violence Position, and the LWVUS Gun Control position. Additional information about LWVIA action to prohibit domestic abusers and persons subject to court restraining orders for domestic abuse from possessing firearms, and the empowerment of Iowa law enforcement personnel to remove guns from the hands of domestic abusers is included on page 31 of this document.

### **LWVIA Position (2001)**

*While a good start has been made in Iowa in providing legal and social support system for victims of domestic violence, the League of Women Voters of Iowa finds the need for several changes, including a review of existing penalties for perpetrators, and working for more consistent enforcement of present laws. The League also supports increased funding for services in counseling; shelter, and education for victims and their families. In addition, the League encourages businesses to develop programs to educate and support their employees who are involved in domestic violence, and also to assist employees in maintaining continuity in employment when at all possible. Finally, we urge that the Department of Public Safety be required to publish statewide statistics related to domestic violence, a task currently cited only as an option in the Code of Iowa.*

*In particular the League of Women Voters supports the following additions or changes in legal processes and penalties:*

- *Waiver of fees for filing for protective services;*
- *Increase of penalties for all domestic violence offenses and utilization and enforcement of maximum penalties;*
- *State-funded periodic training for judicial and enforcement personnel;*
- *Enforcement of penalties for batterers who do not complete required training programs; and*
- *Booking of domestic evidence arrests as domestic violence, not as assault or disturbing the peace, to facilitate the correct compilation of statistics by the Department of Public Safety.*

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**Domestic Violence (continued)**

*The League of Women Voters also supports continuous and adequate state funding for domestic violence services, including:*

- *Support of adequate shelter space;*
- *Educational services;*
- *Housing subsidies and financial support in the form of rental deposits when victims leave shelter*
- *Counseling centering on the welfare of the victim(s), in safe locations, including counseling for affected children; and*
- *Support for local or area legal advocates to assist victims with legal processes as well as advocates to assist with general assistance in safety, protection, and planning for the future.*

## SENTENCING AND CORRECTIONS

*Position in Brief: Support of discretion in sentencing through the use of indeterminate sentencing and community corrections.*

### History

The League of women Voters of Iowa supports a justice system that is fair and protects the public safety. LWVIA believes that mandatory sentencing has had an adverse impact on Iowa's justice and corrections systems. This adverse impact could be reduced by providing greater flexibility for judges, Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Iowa board of Parole to consider unique circumstances in criminal cases while sentencing standards set out the Iowa code remain applicable. The sentencing standards consider such factors as the number of offender's prior offenses, age of the offender and severity of the crime.

The LWVIA supports an indeterminate sentencing structure. An indeterminate sentence is a sentence given by the judge that orders the maximum amount of time that is to be served. It permits the releasing authority such as the Iowa Board of Parole in consultation with the Iowa Department of Corrections to release the offender earlier if it is warranted.

The LWVIA supports legislation that considers offenders with special needs. Some examples of offenders with special needs are the mentally retarded, mentally ill, geriatric inmates, and medically needy.

The LWVIA supports Iowa's system of community based corrections (CBCs) for offenders. CBCs should provide treatment, when appropriate, for offenders in the community while maintaining safeguards for the public. Iowa should maximize community corrections by providing adequate funding.

### LWVIA Position (2002)

The LWVIA supports adopting sentencing legislation that is based on valid and reliable research. Such legislation should consider:

- Proportionality of all sentences to crimes committed
- Judicial discretion
- Budget constraints on the Iowa Department of Corrections
- Effectiveness of Treatment and other programs for offenders

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote the wise management of the resources in the public interest and an environment beneficial to life.*

### LAND USE

***Position in Brief:*** *Support for a policy that promotes preservation of prime agricultural land and that stipulates planning and management activities for wise stewardship of land resources.*

### History

Living in the nation's heartland, LWVIA members have long been sensitive to conservation and land use issues but their first formal land use study paralleled the state government's interest in the issue. In 1971 the Legislative Council authorized an interim land use study committee. In the early 1970s, LWVIA convention delegates adopted land use as a study item. With no LWVUS position on land use to look to, LWVIA was breaking new ground.

Against this backdrop LWVIA began its comprehensive study.

On the basis of this 1973 position, LWVIA lobbied, provided testimony, helped publicize public hearings on land use bills, and saw its members appointed to legislative interim land use committees. LWVIA was awarded a grant from the Iowa Board for Public Programs in the Humanities to host public forums on "Land: Private Ownership and Public Interest," formed a "Citizens for Land Use Betterment" coalition, and had Local Leagues at work in their respective communities urging planning and zoning improvements. In 1975 the Iowa chapter of the Soil Conservation Society of America awarded LWVIA the "Friend of Conservation Award" for its work toward land use legislation. (*A Land Use Law for Iowa*, pub #742, Jan. 1974).

Despite repeated efforts to secure a strong land use bill, nothing was passed until 1977. Though not as strong a law as LWVIA wanted, the League did support this law that provided for the development of land use policy recommendations for consideration by the legislature. Using a process that emphasized participation by citizens and local governments, various groups presented recommendations to the State Land Preservation Policy Commission. LWVIA, together with Local Leagues, testified at each level of the recommendations' development. The commission presented its final report to the legislature in May 1979.

With each subsequent legislative session, LWVIA continued to press for strong land use legislation. And, at its 1981 convention, LWVIA delegates inserted the words "soil conservation" into the land use position, having found that the issues of land preservation and soil conservation were inextricably linked. The position was updated to assess progress at the state level toward good land use policy, to involve Local Leagues in a survey of local land use practices and legislation, and to strengthen member knowledge of soil conservation issues.

The 1987 LWVIA convention adopted slightly new wording of the land use position to define more precisely the original intent: "prime" was inserted and "wilderness" was changed to "natural areas."

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## Land Use (continued)

Although L WVIA broke new ground with its land use position, on other natural resource issues it has used L WVUS position statements to lobby in the Iowa legislature.

A Land Use Update Study was approved by the 2000 Convention and extended by the 2001 Convention.

In 2001, the LWVIA lobbyist gave testimony to the House Natural Resources Committee on land use legislation. The bill did not get out of committee.

In 2002 a League member served on an interim land use committee.

Additionally in 2002, LWVIA joined with the Iowa Environmental Council, Iowa Citizens' Action Network, and several other organizations to lobby effectively in support of legislation that would strictly regulate siting of new Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) and expand the authority of County Supervisors to approve construction of new CAFOs and expansion of existing CAFOs throughout the state. The legislation passed in 2002 made significant improvements in rural Land Use Regulation.

The L WVIA 2002 Convention unanimously approved the updated Land Use Position.

## LWVIA Position (1973, 1982, 1987, 2002)

*Action to support an integrated local, county, regional, and state land use policy which enhances our quality of life and provides for:*

- *preservation of prime agricultural land and sensitive natural areas, e.g. prairies, woodlands wetlands, as priorities;*
- *soil and water conservation;*
- *managed urban growth which protects 'agricultural land fosters higher density urban development, encourages infill development and redevelopment in cities, and preserves natural areas;*
- *a statewide land capability inventory;*
- *a diversified transportation system; and*
- *state-wide distribution of natural areas, open spaces, and public recreation areas.*

*A state land use agency or other state entity should provide policy and guidelines for local and regional planning bodies, including guidelines for zoning decisions. Land use planning and enforcement, should be adequately funded, by a combination of state funds, fees, local taxation, and federal funds. State personnel should assist jurisdictions which cannot afford their own planners: The state agency should have power to initiate action and levy fines against violators if local jurisdictions fail to do so, and to hear appeals from local decisions.*

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## Land Use (continued)

*Land use impact statements should be required for cases involving state funds, large developments above a designated size, land acquisitions by other government agencies, transportation and utility sites and extractive industries. Citizens should have the right to sue to prevent the granting of variances. Public input at all levels of decision making is essential to sound land use planning.*

*The League supports the concept of publicly owned recreation trails and abandoned railroad rights-of-way. If present routes cannot be maintained, the League encourages governmental bodies to purchase abandoned rights-of-way for use as recreation trails, wildlife habitat, or for open spaces.*



## **LWVUS PROGRAM - ACTION IN IOWA**

*Action at the state level is sometimes based on LWVUS positions. A summary of action in Iowa is provided under each of the national positions.*

For the League's complete national program, consult the current issue of *Impact on Issues*, published by the League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

### **GOVERNMENT**

#### **CITIZEN RIGHTS**

***Position in Brief:*** *Citizen Right to Know/Citizen Participation: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making. (1984, LWVUS)*

L WVUS Principle: ... The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

This position is also incorporated into the national Civil Rights position (June, 1984) LWVIA History

League support for open meetings originated in the 1972 Congress position; in 1973 Leagues were permitted to apply the position at local and state levels; in 1974 support for open meetings became part of LWV Principles. In 1975 LWVIA worked for the adoption of the Iowa Administrative Procedures Act to provide a minimal procedural code for the operation of all state agencies when taking action affecting the rights and duties of the public. In 1977

L WVIA announced support for the open conduct of collective bargaining for public employees.

Local Leagues and L WVIA act regularly to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public. LWVIA lobbied for the adoption of the 1978 Iowa Open Meetings Law. The law seeks to assure that the basis and rationale of governmental decisions, as well as those decisions themselves, are readily accessible to the public, with any ambiguities being resolved in favor of openness. Since its implementation in 1979, LWVIA and Local Leagues have promoted compliance with the Open Meetings Law by means of observer programs, public statements, and education. Efforts to weaken the law were resisted in 1981.

Late in 1982 a year-round, full-time General Assembly Public Information Office was established by the Legislative Council. This was an issue strongly supported by the League and was a legislative priority in 1983. The name of the office has since been changed to the Legislative Information Office.

The League worked for the Examination of Public Records Act, ensuring public access to governmental information. LWVIA supported a revision of the Public Records Law in 1984.

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**Citizen Rights (continued)**

In coalition with the Freedom of Information Council and others, League lobbied successfully for a broad definition of "public records." The following year L WVIA monitored the work of an interim committee established for further study of the law.

In 1991-92 LWVIA lobbied against a bill which would allow victims of sexual assault to keep I their names from public records. League action was based on our support for openness in government. League does not support publishing victim names without their permission. This has not become law.

In 1996 L WVIA gifted to the Iowa Legislature a website developed by L WVIA member Jim Freeman in cooperation with Cornell College. The website provides up-to-date legislative information for those with Internet access.

**DC SELF-GOVERNMENT AND FULL VOTING REPRESENTATION**

*Position in Brief: Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and representation in both houses of Congress. (1938, LWVUS)*

**LWVIA History**

The U.S. Congress passed the DC Voting Rights Amendment in August 1978 and allowed seven years for ratification by 3/4 of the states. Ratification of the DC Voting Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was a legislative priority in 1981. LWVIA organized a coalition of supporters, brought a "gagged" George Washington to the state capitol on President's Day, featured Mayor Marion, Barry of the District of Columbia at the 1981 LWVIA convention banquet, and wrote letters and editorials to newspapers. LWVIA was given major credit for Iowa's ratification in 1984. Iowa was the 14th of only 16 states to ratify the amendment before the expiration date in 1985.

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## ELECTION PROCESS

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE

***Position in Brief:*** *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. (1982, LWVUS)*

### LWVIA History

With LWVIA's support in 1973, the Iowa Campaign Disclosure Act was adopted. It provided for an income tax check-off option to create an election fund, disclosure of campaign financing by local and state candidates, and establishment of a Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission. Intense lobbying in 1981 by League members saved the commission from a move to eliminate it. In 1983 the League successfully prevented a weakening of finance disclosure requirements and a raise in the threshold reporting level to \$500. Local Leagues monitored-local financial disclosure reports for the Iowa Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission.

LWVIA joined- a coalition spearheaded by Common Cause in 1986 with the goal of securing legislation for public campaign financing for state officers and legislators. Such a bill passed the House but died in a Senate committee in the last days of the 1986 session. In 1987 an improved bill providing for funding, restricted campaigns, and limits on PAC contributions was approved by the legislature but vetoed by the governor. The League again worked with the coalition to secure its passage.

During the 1997 legislative session, LWVIA called for the appointment of an independent commission to take a close look at campaign financing and practices. Letters were sent to the governor and the legislative leadership asking for their support. Op-ed pieces and letters-to-the-editor were submitted to local newspapers with several being published. A press conference was organized by LWVIA to focus on the need for the commission. No commission was appointed.

In 2000 LWVIA took action to bring the state Political Action Committee (PAC) definition into compliance with court ordered standards.

In 2002 LWVIA presented testimony to the Campaign Finance Disclosure Committee to encourage strong ethics regulations for lobbyists.

## **GUN CONTROL**

***Position in Brief:*** *Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. (1990, 1994, 1998 LWVUS)*

### **LWVIA History**

LWVIA joined the Iowa Coalition for Sensible Gun Laws in 2001, based on our state Domestic Violence Position and our National Gun Control Position. At a coalition press conference in 2002, the LWVIA President spoke in support of proposed legislation that would 1) empower Iowa law enforcement personnel to remove guns from the hands of domestic abusers, and 2) align Iowa law with federal law that prohibits the possession of firearms by persons convicted of domestic assault or under a court restraining order for domestic violence. We also supported legislation that would close the Gun Show Loophole which allows the purchase of firearms at gun shows without criminal background checks or maintenance of gun sales records... Neither bill was considered by the Legislature.

## **VOTING RIGHTS**

***Position in Brief:*** *Protect the right of every citizen to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.*

### **LWVIA History**

LWVIA has supported longer hours at the polls, postcard registration, election-day registration, address change at the polls, voter assistance at the poll, change in absentee voter procedures, education for election officials, and nonpartisan mobile registrars.

The League was instrumental in the 1982 extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most successful pieces of civil rights legislation in this century. Specifically, through persistent lobbying by letter, visits, and phone calls, LWVIA persuaded Senator Charles Grassley to vote in favor of extending the act's provisions.

In 1999 and in 2001, LWVIA provided testimony to the House State Government Committee opposing legislation to make it more difficult for first time voters to vote, opposing requirements to close voter registration 21 days (rather than 10 days) in advance of an election, and opposing a requirement to show photo identification at the voting place.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### TRADE

***Position in Brief:*** Support for systematic reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements. (1973, LWVUS)

### LWVIA History

Following passage of the 1974 Trade Reform Act, LWVIA testified at regional hearings regarding the impact of trade on Iowans. Using the LWVUS Trade position, LWVIA has opposed the "buy American" policies of the Iowa Department of Transportation and has lobbied against restrictive trade legislation.

Between 1977 and 1979, LWVIA members successfully lobbied the congressional delegation for acceptance of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations Treaty.

During December 1979 and January 1980, LWVIA-CIS sponsored a series of 25-minute radio programs on the theme "Iowa's Stake in World Trade," which featured conversations with state leaders-in government, agriculture, industry, labor, and consumer affairs.

In August 1984, LWVIA-CIS organized and hosted a five-state conference on "Agriculture's Stake in World Trade." Then U.S. Secretary of Agriculture John Block was among the featured speakers. Conference participants explored issues and options on public policy and agriculture's future in world trade. The two-day program included special speakers addressing fiscal policies, U. S. domestic and trade policies, European concerns, the impact on lesser developed countries, and farm policy related to exports.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

### **CHILD CARE**

*Position in Brief: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it. (1988, L WVUS)*

#### **LWVIA History**

The League has routinely recognized the importance of the availability of affordable, quality child care to families in the workforce or educational training. Since 1995 L WVIA has been a member of the Iowa Child Care Coalition and actively advocating for sufficient funding for child care programs as well as measures to encourage quality care.

In 1999 LWVIA lobbied successfully for the legislature to set-up local Empowerment Boards to allocate state funds for local programs for children ages 0 - 5.

From 1999-2002 LWVIA lobbied for increased child care funds and improved child care regulations.

### **EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK**

*Position in Brief: Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of all children. (1994, LWVUS)*

#### **LWVIA History**

LWVIA is providing assistance to the Iowa's Child Campaign, which is a three-year campaign to educate the public on the importance of the first three years of life and investing in programs to support families of these young children. The Campaign will also have a public policy advocacy component.

### **EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND HOUSING**

*Position in Brief: Support equal access to education, employment, and housing. (1966, 1969, LWVUS)*

#### **LWVIA History**

The League has consistently supported federal programs aimed at combating poverty and discrimination and has worked at the community level for their successful implementation.

Nationally, the League has worked actively in opposition to tuition tax credits, to budget cuts in social welfare programs, and to large, untargeted block grants. The League has supported new, strengthened fair-housing legislation and new civil rights legislation that would reaffirm that the intent of Congress in passing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was that the law be broadly interpreted and applied.

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### **Equal Access to Education, Employment, and Housing (continued)**

In Iowa the League has been active in every one of the above areas. It has worked in numerous coalitions, often taking the lead to guarantee equal access. It has fought tuition tax credits. At the national level and attempted to prevent the passage of tuition tax deductions/credits in the 1987 sessions of the Iowa legislature. It worked with a coalition of groups on an unsuccessful court challenge of the law.

The League has encouraged school desegregation and resisted attempts to outlaw busing as a tool of desegregation; LWVIA has led a coalition monitoring the implementation of Title IX in Iowa schools.

In the fall of 1984 LWVIA participated in a LWVUS study of sex equity in vocational education programs and published a report and report summary (*Sex Equity in Vocational Education in Iowa*). As a follow-up, LWVIA cosponsored with the Iowa Department of Public Instruction (DPI) "Partners in the Future," which was designed to encourage and recognize creative approaches to increasing nontraditional enrollments in vocational education. League testified on the subject before legislative subcommittees and at hearings before the DPI.

LWVIA has encouraged local affirmative action efforts, monitored comparable worth legislation, participated in the Women and Work Task Force, and fought efforts to cut funding for the Iowa Civil Rights- Commission. Local Leagues have worked at increasing the supply of low-rental housing and day-care.

In 1995 LWVIA supported the federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996. Then in 2002 LWVIA worked for Reauthorization of the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, pushing for increased Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funding.

### **EQUAL RIGHTS**

***Position in Brief:*** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring law into compliance with the goals of the ERA. (1972, 1980, LWVUS)

#### **LWVIA History:**

Iowa ratified the national Equal Rights Amendment early, and then LWVIA joined the fight for ratification in other states by raising money for the effort. League has regularly worked to support autonomy and adequate funding for the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, culminating in a dramatic lobbying effort from the floor of the 1985 LWVIA convention.

See Iowa ERA for "50 States Project,"

## HEALTH CARE

*Position in Brief: Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all US residents and controls health care costs. (1993, LWVUS)*

### LWVIA History

LWVIA held two conferences on health care in 1992 addressing health care reform at the state level League also participated in the Iowa Health Care for All coalition which advocated for legislation. to provide access- to. a basic level of health care for all Iowans.

In 2002 L WVIA worked with a coalition to pass legislation mandating contraceptive health insurance be provided for women.

## INCOME ASSISTANCE

*Position in Brief: Support for a federalized system of income assistance, with uniform standards, to meet the basic needs of all persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available. (1970, LWVUS)*

### LWVIA History

This LWVUS position states that supportive services, such as child care, health care, and legal services, should be available but not compulsory for participants in the income assistance program. LWVIA has lobbied the Iowa legislature heavily under this position.

LWVIA belongs to the Human Needs Advocates, a coalition of concerned persons and organizations that grew out of cuts in funding for social services. In 1982 that group successfully lobbied for the AFDC/Unemployed Parents program LWVIA edited the group's publication that called attention to the problem The group also successfully lobbied for implementation (funding) of the medically needy program in Iowa (a LWVIA legislative priority).

LWVIA supported creation of the Food Bank of Iowa and licensing requirements for daycare facilities.

## URBAN POLICY

*Position in Brief: Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life. (1979; LWVUS)*

### LWVIA History

Most League action in this program item has taken the form of action in local communities. Local Leagues have been concerned with enhancing the economic base of cities, monitoring of general revenue sharing, and CETA. Many actions overlap those of the other Social Policy positions (Equal Opportunity and Income Assistance). Governmental accountability is an ongoing League concern at every level, as are intergovernmental cooperation and public- and private-sector cooperation.



## NATURAL RESOURCES

### RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

*Position in Brief: Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government. (1958, 1986 LWVUS)*

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION CONTROL

*Position in Brief: Preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment (1958, 1986 LWVUS)*

#### LWVIA History

In 2002 LWVIA successfully worked for passage of stricter environmental standards for large hog confinement units.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

*Position in Brief: Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources. (1958, 1986 LWVUS).*

#### LWVIA History

Under the three L WVUS Natural Resources positions listed above, L WVIA has supported:

- ◀ Iowa Superfund: A hazardous waste remedial fund to finance the cleanup of abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste disposal sites or hazardous conditions. Fees are levied against generators, transporters, and disposers of hazardous wastes
- ◀ Toxic Cleanup Days: Pilot programs in two counties sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources whereby citizens could turn in their household hazardous wastes during a community collection day. In the late 1990's LWVIA successfully supported the expansion of the pilot programs to a statewide program;
- ◀ Hazardous Waste Facility: Legislation that says the state of Iowa can operate such a facility;
- ◀ Low-level radioactive waste disposal;
- ◀ Establishing state regulations for underground storage tanks;
- ◀ Groundwater protection legislation; and
- ◀ Stringency regulations allowing state governments to set stricter standards than the federal regulations in force for environmental protection.

## POSITIONS DROPPED FROM LWVIA PROGRAM

### ANNUAL UNLIMITED LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

#### ***LWVIA Position (1965, 1975, 1982)***

*Action to support annual unlimited legislative sessions.*

#### **History**

After adoption of this position, L WVIA recommended annual sessions to the platform committees of both parties and then, in 1966, to the General Assembly. The League worked successfully for the second passage of the amendment in 1968 and the subsequent ratification. The League was unable to prevent legislative rules that limited General Assembly funds to 120 days in the first year, and 100 days in the second year.

Because the legislative process has established annual sessions and the rules specify their length, L WVIA dropped this position at its 1987 convention.

## TRANSPORTATION

#### ***LWVIA Position (1981)***

*Action to promote energy efficient and environmentally-sound transportation systems that enhance the state's agricultural economy and the well-being of cities and afford better access to housing and jobs.*

*Comprehensive transit systems for our cities should include: automobiles, trains, buses, bicycles and streetcars.*

*Transportation system dependent on public financing should be publicly controlled and considered a public service whose operating costs are subsidized as are the costs of all public service.*

*Transportation planning and construction must weigh all social and environmental costs. Continuous and widespread community participation must be insured throughout the planning, development and operation of any transportation program.*

*Government policy should encourage community development/transportation patterns that promote efficient energy use.*

#### **History**

The position was gleaned from other LWVIA and L WVUS positions. It was adopted by the 1981 convention delegates who directed LWVIA to focus on the transportation needs of Iowa's agricultural economy. Since 1982, LWVIA has evaluated legislation resulting from a Governor's Task Force recommendation on transportation.

Delegates at the 1987 LWVIA convention agreed the national position is sufficient and dropped the LWVIA position.

## **DISTRICT COURT-FAMILY DIVISION**

*LWVIA Position (1979)*

*Action in support of combining family-related problems into a family division within the District Court of Iowa. This division would be separate and distinct and equal in stature to the division of general jurisdiction and funded by legislative appropriation.*

*The jurisdiction of the family division should be broad in scope. The exclusive and original jurisdiction should include:*

*For juveniles:*

- *child in need of assistance*
- *juvenile delinquents*
- *adoption*
- *termination of parental rights*
- *non-felonious assault cases against family members*
- *treatment or commitment of mentally ill or mentally disabled children*

*For adults:*

- *matrimonial matters including dissolution; separation; support, alimony and custody*
- *child neglect and abuse*
- *contributing to the delinquency of a minor*
- *non-felonious assault cases against family members*
- *treatment or commitment of mentally ill or mentally disabled adults*
- *alimony collection*

*Existing community services, including mental health, marriage counseling, legal assistance, child care services and probation services should be made available to the family division judges.*

*Family division judges should have special qualifications and training in family law.*

*The LWVIA supports supervision, rotation and review of family division judges, to ensure uniform delivery of high quality judicial services.*

*Investigative services at intake and legal aid to judges should be made available to family division judges.*

The position, which evolved from the juvenile justice position in 1979 was dropped in 1985.

## **TEAM PROVISION**

*LWVIA Position (1965, 1974, 1982, 1987) Action to support:*

- *election of the governor and lieutenant governor as a team;*
- *selection of the team either by political party convention or in a primary election;*
- *determination by the governor of the lieutenant governor's executive duties.*

The Iowa Constitution was amended to include the election of the governor and lieutenant governor as a team in 1988. This position was dropped in 1996.