



## League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
MINNESOTA

**Program  
for  
Action**

***1990-91***

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League—national, state or local—Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Child Support, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1989-91 Programs of the LWVMN, which includes all local Leagues in the state, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in bold-face);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section;
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1990-92 (Publication No.386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 prepaid).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action is on a county level, other Leagues in the county agree.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

- 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 which 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

#### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and ensure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district nor upon the willingness of local voters to tax themselves. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

*Study Adopted 1989:* Financing Education in Minnesota.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the con-

tinuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum of statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a flexible Minnesota multi-tax system with emphasis on maintaining state services through a combination of spending cuts and increased taxation when state funds are short and decreased taxation when there is a budget surplus. Support of using the Minnesota individual income tax as the elastic tax, making rates more progressive when increasing state revenue and lowering rates for all income levels when decreasing state revenue. Support of state relief for property taxes. Support of property tax reform. Support for setting priorities in allocating state funds. Support of state aids to local governments, especially to local school districts and to the local unit of government that provides the major portion of local services (county and/or city). Support of more efficient state administrative and legislative expenditures.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education, and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States

#### I. GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

**Agricultural Policy:** Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

**Citizen Rights:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

**Congress and the Presidency:** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

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

**Election Process:** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. 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. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

**Fiscal Policy:** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

**Gun Control:** Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

**Voting Rights:** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

## II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.

**Arms Control:** Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

**Military Policy and Defense Spending:** Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

**Trade:** Support systematic reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

**United Nations:** Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

**U.S. Relations with Developing Countries:** Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

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

**Environmental Protection and Pollution Control:** Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with the maximum protection of the public health and environment.

**Public Participation:** Promote public understanding and participation in decision-making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

## IV. SOCIAL POLICY

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty.

**Child Care:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

**Equality of Opportunity:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**Meeting Basic Human Needs:** Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Urban Policy:** Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

## V. HEALTH CARE STUDY

Evaluate public and private mechanisms for delivery and financing of health care in the United States.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see Impact on Issues, 1990-92 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 prepaid).

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### JUDICIARY

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

#### Details

Support of:

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.
- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

### CORRECTIONS

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

**Adult Corrections Position Details***Support of:*

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

**Juvenile Justice Position Details***Support of:*

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.

- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

**Sentencing Position Details***Support of:*

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.
- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - the need for drug counseling;
  - whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - academic training of the offender;
  - need for psychiatric treatment;
  - restitution when appropriate;
  - the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, good time, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982, the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983.

League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor, to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

**EDUCATION**

(See Social Policy section for additional positions and CMAL for new study.)

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

**LWVMN Position:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

**Details**

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

**FINANCING OF EDUCATION**

**LWVMN Position:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district nor upon the willingness of local voters to tax themselves. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all.

**Details***Support of:*

- the concept of the foundation formula program. Any revisions in the current school finance should support:
  - provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983);
  - encouragement of financial efficiencies (1983);
  - continuing the concept of state-provided categorical aids (1983), including adequate financing of special aids for children with physical and mental problems, and children with other learning disabilities (1967);
  - funding special programs for gifted and high-potential students (1967);
  - reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments (1983);
  - allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability (1983);
  - using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding (1983);
  - maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seeking alternative funding sources for many (1983).

League members are opposed to continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction. (1983)

**LWVMN study adopted 1989:** Financing Education in Minnesota. The consensus will be reported in the spring of 1991.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

### Details

#### Support of:

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.
- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

## LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

### Details

#### Support of:

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions—85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal—to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.
- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989, we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts. In 1987, the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a "general revenue formula." LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented (which were folded into a "categorical reserve" to be used for one or all of the formerly categorical programs) would be lost without dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988, we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education.

Adequate financing of education is an on-going concern for LWVMN. During the 1989 session, LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs. The 1989 Convention adopted a study of the financing of public schools. The consensus will be reported in the spring of 1991.

## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.*

## I. CITIZEN RIGHTS

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the citizen's right to know and to facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

## PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota. During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session League will work with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's "Prevention. Not Prohibition" campaign.

## ELECTION LAWS

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

## Details

## Support of:

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973, an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Handicapped access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session, LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session, LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

## Details

## Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973, LWVMN worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board, and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983, the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session, LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). Effective January 1, 1991, a candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, will receive a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and will not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The new statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fundraisers during a regular legislative session.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congress-

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

sional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

## OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

**LWVUS Position:** Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute.

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

**LWVUS Positions:** Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

## Details

## Support of:

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - prompt judicial review. (1979)

### III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - time span for collecting signatures;
  - eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - size of vote required for passage;
  - procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

##### Opposition to:

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

continues to improve, although reducing the number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. Legislators received a per diem increase in compensation and additional expense allowances in 1973; the 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district. The 1977 Legislature increased the legislators' per diem allowances and provided for salary increases beginning in 1979.

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974, LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN will work with a coalition to assure timely redistricting of the state Legislature.

### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a flexible Minnesota multi-tax system with emphasis on maintaining state services through a combination of spending cuts and increased taxation when state funds are short and decreased taxation when there is a budget surplus. Support of using the Minnesota individual income tax as the elastic tax, making rates more progressive when increasing state revenue and lowering rates for all income levels when decreasing state revenue. Support of property tax reform; state relief for property taxes; and state aids to local governments, especially to local school districts and to the local unit of government that provides the major portion of local services (county and/or city). Support for setting priorities in allocating state funds. Support of more efficient state administrative and legislative expenditures.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- property tax reform through equitable assessments, fewer classifications, and more restrictive criteria for determining exemptions. LWVMN also advocates less dependence on the property tax as a source of revenue. (1967)
- equitable assessments by professionally trained, adequately paid assessors with districts large enough to warrant their full-time employment. Periodic reappraisals should be mandatory. The state should be responsible for achieving uniform standards for assessment and should assess industrial property. There should be fewer classes of property for taxing purposes. (1967)
- more restrictive criteria for determining property tax exemption. Property that is profit making or in competition with private taxpaying enterprises should be taxed regardless of ownership. There should be periodic reconsideration of each exemption, and owners of exempt property should pay enough taxes, or a charge in lieu of taxes, to cover the costs of local services. Tax exemptions as socio-economic incentives should be used sparingly and for a limited time in each case. (1967)
- diminished dependence on the property tax because it does not necessarily reflect ability to pay and equitable administration is difficult. Local services such as police and fire protection, streets, parks, and sewers are the services most appropriately financed by the property tax. Services of broader than local significance such as welfare are less appropriately financed by the property tax. Education is appropriately financed partly by the property tax and partly by revenue from other sources. (1967)

When taxation is increased to provide additional revenue, LWVMN supports:

- retaining exemptions to the **sales tax**; sales tax increases on cigarettes and tobacco and alcoholic beverages; LWVMN does not agree on a general increase in sales tax rates.
- more progressive **individual income tax** rates with exemptions retained at 1977 level; retaining deductibility of federal income taxes as a feature of the Minnesota income tax; opposes an across-the-board increase in income tax rates.
- retaining the Minnesota **corporate excise tax** with no increase in rate; does not agree on changing the corporate tax to a progressive rate.
- retaining the homestead credit and senior citizens' freeze credit as forms of state relief for **property taxes**; retaining the income-adjusted homestead credit (circuit breaker). (1977)

When measures are taken to decrease taxation, LWVMN:

- supports retaining the Minnesota **sales tax** with no increase in exemptions.
- supports a decrease in **individual income tax** rates; opposes an increase in individual income tax exemptions; opposes a general tax refund.
- supports an increase in the homestead credit as a form of state relief for **property taxes**.
- does not agree on decreasing the **corporate excise tax** rate.
- does not agree on providing an increase in the income-adjusted homestead credit (circuit breakers). (1977)

When cuts in state spending are necessary, LWVMN:

- supports cuts in spending for general state government, governor and related agencies, and the legislative branch.
- opposes cuts in state aid to local governments, especially local school districts.
- opposes cuts in state spending for natural resources, corrections, higher education and agriculture. (1977)

When increases in state spending are proposed, LWVMN:

- supports setting priorities for state spending rather than a percentage increase in all areas of state funding.
- supports an increase in state aids to local school districts.
- opposes increases in spending for general state government, governor and related agencies, and the legislative branch.
- opposes increases in spending for public retirement benefits.
- supports increases for mass transportation of benefit to the entire state. (1977)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Since the mid '50s, LWVMN has studied financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support for property tax reform. In 1969, LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from the property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979, this position and the existence of a state budget surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by index in income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation and the attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980's.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which begins to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state will fund income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements.

LWVMN supported the tax bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services. As the Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy reviews individual state programs for need and efficiency, LWVMN will review our positions to determine whether to support the Commission's recommendations.

## V. FIREARMS

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

**LWVMN Position: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)**

### Details

#### Support for:

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### Opposition to:

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)**

### WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position: Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)**

### Details

#### Support for:

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:
  - recognize regional differences in supply and use.
  - integrate both ground and surface water management.
  - integrate quality and quantity management.
  - provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
  - consider future use (of water resources).
  - promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
  - provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
  - distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - provide for education and technical assistance.
  - require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.

- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects, future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
  - federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
  - interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
  - increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission proceedings.

## SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position: Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.**

### Details

#### Support of:

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

## LAND USE

**LWVMN Position: Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.**

### Details

#### Support a state plan that should:

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.

- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances.
- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979, emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s has so far concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN has used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board on determining direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

**Air:** In 1971, LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976, LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981, LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act: a bill was passed in 1990. In 1982, LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulphur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings, standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legisla-

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

tion creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982, the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit legislation law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN in coalition with other environmental groups made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

During the 1989 session, LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through waste reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste will be used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN will monitor further waste reduction proposals, including those dealing with packaging.

In 1977, LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984, when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975, LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

**Energy:** In 1977, LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education, and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

### CHILD SUPPORT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

### CHILD PROTECTION

**LWVMN Position:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.
- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.

- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

### CHILD HEALTH

**LWVMN Position: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)**

#### Details

#### Support of:

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

### CHILD CARE

**LWVUS Position: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.**

**LWVMN Position: Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)**

#### Details

#### Support of:

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.

- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position: Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)**

#### Details

#### Support of:

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

### III. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position: Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)**

#### Details

#### Support of:

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including stan-

dards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.

- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s, LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s, LWVMN continued investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977, members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973, LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature. Since 1975, LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983, the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

**Merging National and State Positions on Equality of Opportunity:** The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967, LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session, LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief. The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978, LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983, LWVMN supported pay equity

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law. During the 1990 session, LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law in April.

In 1975 and 1977, LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969, LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

**Child Support:** In 1982, Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years, LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

**Child Protection, Health and Child Care:** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level. League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In a coalition the League helped to found (Child Care WORKS), LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

**Teen Pregnancy:** In 1988, Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Mental Health:** After a two-year study, the LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session, the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to community-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session, LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

and 1976, legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances, LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators. In 1971 and 1973, LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature, LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977, LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools. In 1984 and 1985, LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985, LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians.

**COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES**

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental problems of metropolitan concern.*

**New CMAL study adopted at May 1989 Convention:**  
School Integration/Desegregation: A study to focus on proposals for integrating the metropolitan area schools.

**METROPOLITAN COUNCIL**

**CMAL Position: Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. (1969)**

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - The appointive process has provided high caliber individuals with broad vision and concern for the metro area as a whole.
  - The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1976)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population. In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976)

**HOUSING**

**CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)**

**HEALTH**

**CMAL Position: Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)**

**HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION**

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them. Since its inception, the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975, CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977, CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Housing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982 and 1983, CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers—the implementors of policy plans adopted by the Council.

**FUNDING/FINANCING****FISCAL DISPARITIES**

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970)

**FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES**

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - responsible administrative procedures.

**HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION**

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971, CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill, which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally, the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, “The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area,” reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, “Fiscal Disparities: An Overview,” appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly.

In 1975, CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council’s Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the so-

**HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION (continued)**

lution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

**HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING**

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local “Blueprint for Action.” (1989)

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

**LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment, (2) use public investment to the best advantage, and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.

- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

**ENVIRONMENT**

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- including water quality standards in the management of non-point sources of water pollution, the management of on-site disposal systems, and the protection of open space and wetlands.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

**SOLID WASTE**

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

**HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION**

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

**Water Resources:** In 1975, CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Missis-

**HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION (continued)**

sippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission’s Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metro Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985, CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes. Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975, the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977, CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978, CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979, CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

**TRANSPORTATION**

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system’s major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)

**Details****CMAL supports:**

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year, massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969), which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971), which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time.

In 1985, CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board, which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

## GOVERNMENT

**CMAL Position: Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)**

### Details

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.
  - creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meetings; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and

publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.

- regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
- full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.
- The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementors, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

In 1973, CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications, *CMAL's Seven Counties in Transition: A Study of the Evolving Role of the County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, *Hennepin County*.

In 1982-83, CMAL supported counties as implementors of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

In 1989, CMAL adopted a study of the proposals for integrating metropolitan area schools. The consensus is due in May 1991.

*January 1991*

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA**

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# Program for Action

## 1993-95

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League—national, state or local—Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1993-95 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area.

For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in bold-face);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section;
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1992-94 (Publication No.386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 prepaid).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

- 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 which 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

#### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and ensure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory

voter referendum on constitutional amendments; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum of statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a flexible Minnesota multi-tax system with emphasis on maintaining state services through a combination of spending cuts and increased taxation when state funds are short and decreased taxation when there is a budget surplus. Support of using the Minnesota individual income tax as the elastic tax, making rates more progressive when increasing state revenue and lowering rates for all income levels when decreasing state revenue. Support of state relief for property taxes. Support of property tax reform. Support for setting priorities in allocating state funds. Support of state aids to local governments, especially to local school districts and to the local unit of government that provides the major portion of local services (county and/or city). Support of more efficient state administrative and legislative expenditures.

LWVMN voted to adopt a new study of Financing State Government at the 1993 state convention.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education, and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforce-

ment of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### FAMILY ISSUES

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Housing:** Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low-, and moderate-incomes. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services..

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

## Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States

### I. GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

**Agricultural Policy:** Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

#### **Citizen Rights:**

**Citizens' Right to Know/Citizen Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

**Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

**Congress and the Presidency:** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

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

#### **Election Process:**

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

**Campaign Finance.** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

**Fiscal Policy:** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

**Gun Control:** Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

**Voting Rights:** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

### II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.

**Arms Control:** Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

**Military Policy and Defense Spending:** Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

**Trade:** Support systematic reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

**United Nations:** Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

**U.S. Relations with Developing Countries:** Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

### III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

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

**Environmental Protection and Pollution Control:**

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

**Public Participation:** Promote public understanding and participation in decision-making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

**IV. SOCIAL POLICY**

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.

**Child Care:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

**Early Intervention for Children at Risk:** Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of children.

**Equality of Opportunity:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**Health Care:** Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

**Meeting Basic Human Needs:** Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Urban Policy:** Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

**Violence Prevention:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see *Impact on Issues, 1994-96* (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

### **JUDICIARY**

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

#### **Details**

*Support of:*

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.
- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

### **CORRECTIONS**

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

### Adult Corrections Position Details

#### Support of:

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

### Juvenile Justice Position Details

#### Support of:

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.

- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

### Sentencing Position Details

#### Support of:

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.
- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - the need for drug counseling;
  - whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - academic training of the offender;
  - need for psychiatric treatment;
  - restitution when appropriate;
  - the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, good time, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982, the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983.

League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor, to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

## EDUCATION

(See Social Policy section for additional positions and CMAL for new study.)

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVMN Position:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

#### Details

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

**LWVMN Position:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current school finance should support:
  - provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983); until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes. (1991)
  - state funding of the following cost differences between students - pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted, and language differences (ESL and LEP) (1991).
  - state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: sparsity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation. (1991)
  - using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding (1983);
  - encouragement of financial efficiencies (1983);
  - requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the State Department of Education. (1991)
  - allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability. (1983)
  - reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments (1983);
  - the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue (1991)
  - maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seeking alternative funding sources for many (1983).

##### Opposition to:

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction. (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.

- allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.
- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

### LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.**

#### Details

#### Support of:

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions—85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal—to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.

- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.
- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

In 1980 LWVMN published WHAT'S THE SCORE IN MINNESOTA a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988, we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for a multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

**Finance:** During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989, we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts. In 1987, the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a "general revenue formula." LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented (which were folded into a "categorical reserve" to be used for one or all of the formerly categorical programs) would be lost without dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education.

During the 1989 session, LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs. Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian private schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

**Library Funding:** In 1985 LWVMN supported increased funding for public libraries in Minnesota and supported the four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for library services.

## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.*

### I. CITIZEN RIGHTS

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the citizen's right to know and to facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

### PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota. During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, the League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium PREVENTION NOT PROHIBITION campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 Leagues's efforts were focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion.

## ELECTION LAWS

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

### Details

#### Support of:

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973, an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Presidential Primary:** In 1991 League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly."

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

**Term Limits:** LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local office holders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the 1994 ballot.

**Handicapped access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session, LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session, LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

### Details

#### Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973, LWVMN worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board, and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983, the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session, LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). Effective January 1, 1991, a candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, will receive a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and will not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The new statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fundraisers during a regular legislative session.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993, LWVMN supported action by the Legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fundraisers during the legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10 percent. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

## OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

**LWVUS Position:** Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute.

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

**LWVUS Positions:** Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

**LWVMN Position: Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.**

### Details

#### Support of:

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - prompt judicial review. (1979)

## III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position: Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.**

### Details

#### Support of:

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - time span for collecting signatures;
  - eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - size of vote required for passage;
  - procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

#### Opposition to:

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees continues to improve, although reducing the number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. Legislators received a per diem increase in compensation and additional expense allowances in 1973; the 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district. The 1977 Legislature increased the legislators' per diem allowances and provided for salary increases beginning in 1979.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974, LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts, the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission.

**Initiative and Referendum:** LWVMN opposed a constitutional amendment proposed in the 1980 general election that would have provided for initiative and referendum. The League joined a coalition, Citizens for Representative Government, and formed a ballot issues fund to finance the opposition campaign. The amendment was defeated since it did not receive a majority of the votes cast in the election even though pre-election polls indicated that it was supported by 75 to 80% of the electorate.

## IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a flexible Minnesota multi-tax system with emphasis on maintaining state services through a combination of spending cuts and increased taxation when state funds are short and decreased taxation when there is a budget surplus. Support of using the Minnesota individual income tax as the elastic tax, making rates more progressive when increasing state revenue and lowering rates for all income levels when decreasing state revenue. Support of property tax reform; state relief for property taxes; and state aids to local governments, especially to local school districts and to the local unit of government that provides the major portion of local services (county and/or city). Support for setting priorities in allocating state funds. Support of more efficient state administrative and legislative expenditures.

### Details

#### Support of:

- property tax reform through equitable assessments, fewer classifications, and more restrictive criteria for determining exemptions. LWVMN also advocates less dependence on the property tax as a source of revenue. (1967)

- equitable assessments by professionally trained, adequately paid assessors with districts large enough to warrant their full-time employment. Periodic reappraisals should be mandatory. The state should be responsible for achieving uniform standards for assessment and should assess industrial property. There should be fewer classes of property for taxing purposes. (1967)
- more restrictive criteria for determining property tax exemption. Property that is profit making or in competition with private taxpaying enterprises should be taxed regardless of ownership. There should be periodic reconsideration of each exemption, and owners of exempt property should pay enough taxes, or a charge in lieu of taxes, to cover the costs of local services. Tax exemptions as socioeconomic incentives should be used sparingly and for a limited time in each case. (1967)
- diminished dependence on the property tax because it does not necessarily reflect ability to pay and equitable administration is difficult. Local services such as police and fire protection, streets, parks, and sewers are the services most appropriately financed by the property tax. Services of broader than local significance such as welfare are less appropriately financed by the property tax. Education is appropriately financed partly by the property tax and partly by revenue from other sources. (1967)

*When taxation is increased to provide additional revenue, LWVMN supports:*

- retaining exemptions to the **sales tax**; sales tax increases on cigarettes and tobacco and alcoholic beverages; LWVMN does not agree on a general increase in sales tax rates.
- more progressive **individual income tax** rates with exemptions retained at 1977 level; retaining deductibility of federal income taxes as a feature of the Minnesota income tax; opposes an across-the-board increase in income tax rates.
- retaining the Minnesota **corporate excise tax** with no increase in rate; does not agree on changing the corporate tax to a progressive rate.
- retaining the homestead credit and senior citizens' freeze credit as forms of state relief for **property taxes**; retaining the income-adjusted homestead credit (circuit breaker). (1977)

*When measures are taken to decrease taxation, LWVMN:*

- supports retaining the Minnesota **sales tax** with no increase in exemptions.
- supports a decrease in **individual income tax** rates; opposes an increase in individual income tax exemptions; opposes a general tax refund.

- supports an increase in the homestead credit as a form of state relief for **property taxes**.
- does not agree on decreasing the **corporate excise tax** rate.
- does not agree on providing an increase in the income-adjusted homestead credit (circuit breakers). (1977)

*When cuts in state spending are necessary, LWVMN:*

- supports cuts in spending for general state government, governor and related agencies, and the legislative branch.
- opposes cuts in state aid to local governments, especially local school districts.
- opposes cuts in state spending for natural resources, corrections, higher education and agriculture. (1977)

*When increases in state spending are proposed, LWVMN:*

- supports setting priorities for state spending rather than a percentage increase in all areas of state funding.
- supports an increase in state aids to local school districts.
- opposes increases in spending for general state government, governor and related agencies, and the legislative branch.
- opposes increases in spending for public retirement benefits.
- supports increases for mass transportation of benefit to the entire state. (1977)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Since the mid '50s, LWVMN has studied financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support for property tax reform. In 1969, LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from the property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979, this position and the existence of a state budget surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by index in income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation and the attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980s.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which begins to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state will fund income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements.

LWVMN supported the tax bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

The 1993 LWVMN Convention adopted a new study of Financing State Government for 1993-95. The study objectives are: to educate our members on the fundamentals of government financing and provide a framework of introduction for the study that explains historical, political, social and economic factors that impact taxing and spending.

## V. FIREARMS

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

**LWVMN Position: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)**

### Details

*Support for:*

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

*Opposition to:*

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed which requires that adults store loaded weapons away from children and enhanced penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

In 1993 LWVMN leadership and lobbyists also lobbied members of Congress successfully for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

### WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

### Details

#### Support for:

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:
  - recognize regional differences in supply and use.
  - integrate both ground and surface water management.
  - integrate quality and quantity management.
  - provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
  - consider future use (of water resources).
  - promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
  - provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
  - distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - provide for education and technical assistance.
  - require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects, future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
  - federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
  - interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
  - increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission proceedings.

## SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

## LAND USE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

### Details

#### *Support a state plan that should:*

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances.
- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979, emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board to determine direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

**Air:** In 1971, LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976, LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981, LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act: a bill was passed in 1990. In 1982, LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulphur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings, standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legislation creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982, the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit legislation law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN in coalition with other environmental groups made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

In 1977, LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes.

During the 1989 session, LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through waste reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste will be used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

From 1990 to 1993, LWVMN continued to support legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizen Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS' seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984, when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

LWVMN opposed the Northern States Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility based on Minnesota statute Sec. 116C.72 which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals Court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975, LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

**Energy:** In 1977, LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education, and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

### Details

#### Support of:

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

**Details***Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

**CHILD SUPPORT**

**LWVMN Position: Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.**

**Details***Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

**CHILD PROTECTION**

**LWVMN Position: Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)**

**Details***Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.
- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.
- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

**CHILD HEALTH**

**LWVMN Position: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)**

**Details***Support of:*

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

**CHILD CARE**

**LWVUS Position: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.**

**LWVMN Position: Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)**

**Details***Support of:*

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.
- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services

### III. HOUSING

**LWVMN Positon:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

#### Details

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low, low, and moderate incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

Support revising the tax system to:

- narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;
- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households;
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

### IV. HEALTH CARE

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U. S. residents. Other U. S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See National Program at a glance for full position.)

### V. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

## VI. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

**LWVMN position: Support for violence prevention programs in our community.**

**LWVUS position: Support violence prevention programs in all communities.**

### Details

#### Support of:

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - Government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes.
  - Local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula.
  - Use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula.
  - Training for childcare providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- The use of public money for a statewide public information and communications campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public monies in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence.
- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually violent pornography.

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s, LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s, LWVMN continued investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977, members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973, LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature. Since 1975, LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983, the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation.

**Merging National and State Positions on Equality of Opportunity:** The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967, LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session, LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief. The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978, LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983, LWVMN supported pay equity legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law. During the 1990 session, LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

plans by the Department of Employee Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

In 1975 and 1977, LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969, LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

**Child Support:** In 1982, Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years, LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

**Child Protection, Health and Child Care:** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level. League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In a coalition the League helped to found (Child Care WORKS), LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

**Teen Pregnancy:** In 1988, Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Health Care:** The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's Healthright legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions. LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; reform now.

**Housing:** LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate-income people to live near the new entry level jobs that are opening up in the outer ring suburbs.

**Mental Health:** The LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session, the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to commu-

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

nity-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session, LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

**Prevention of Violence:** In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General, the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition, and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates state-wide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967 and 1976, legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances, LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators. In 1971 and 1973, LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature, LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977, LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools. In 1984 and 1985, LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985, LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians. In 1994, a fifth edition is being prepared. The preliminary decision in federal court was in favor of the Mille Lacs Band claims.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

In the 1993 session, LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement re the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band. Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwa, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement has been returned to the court calendar.

## COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental problems of metropolitan concern.*

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**CMAL Position:** Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

## HOUSING

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

## HEALTH

**CMAL Position:** Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them. Since its inception, the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975, CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977, CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Hous-

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

ing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982, 1983 and 1993 CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers—the implementors of policy plans adopted by the Council.

## FUNDING/FINANCING

### FISCAL DISPARITIES

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970)

### FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - responsible administrative procedures.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971, CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill, which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally, the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, “The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area,” reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, “Fiscal Disparities: An Overview,” appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly.

In 1975, CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council’s Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the solution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

## SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

**CMAL Position:** Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

## HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local “Blueprint for Action.” (1989)

#### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.

- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

## LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment, (2) use public investment to the best advantage, and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

## ENVIRONMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- including water quality standards in the management of non-point sources of water pollution, the management of on-site disposal systems, and the protection of open space and wetlands.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

## SOLID WASTE

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

**Water Resources:** In 1975, CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Mississippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metro Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines.

CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985, CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes. Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975, the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977, CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978, CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979, CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

**CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)**

### **Details**

#### **CMAL supports:**

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and de-regulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

### **HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION**

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year, massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969), which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971), which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time.

In 1985, CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board, which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**CMAL Position: Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)**

### **Details**

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):

- public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
- systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.
- creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meetings; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.
- regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
- full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while counties are viewed as administrators, implementors, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry their eventual implementation.

### **HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION**

In 1973, CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications: CMAL'S SEVEN COUNTIES IN TRANSITION: A STUDY OF THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE COUNTY IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, HENNEPIN COUNTY.

In 1982-83 CMAL supported counties as implementors of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

*November 1994*

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA**

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# **Program for Action**

## **1995-97**

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League--national, state or local--Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1995-97 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in boldface);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section; and
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1994-96 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036, \$5.00 prepaid).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

- 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 which 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Program Adopted by League of Women Voters  
of Minnesota

### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and ensure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum of statutes; opposition to recall by

voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on broad-based taxes and user fees. Support of an evaluation of all individual revenue sources to determine if it is competitive with other states, efficient, equitable, progressive, reliable, responsive and simple. Support of a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for essential items. Support of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing services provided by local governments and a partial funding for education. Support of a corporation franchise tax competitive with other states. Support of achieving social goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. Support of the principle that state legislation mandating local government action should identify sources of revenue. Support of long-term financial management, budget projections and budget reserve.

LWVMN voted to adopt a new study of State Government Spending at the 1995 state convention.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

##### FAMILY ISSUES

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Housing:** Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low-, and moderate-incomes. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

## Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States

### I. GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

**Agricultural Policy:** Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

**Citizen Rights:**

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation:**

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

**Individual Liberties:** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

**Congress and the Presidency:** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

**DC Self-Government and Full Voting**

**Representation:** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and representation in both houses of Congress.

**Election Process:**

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

**Campaign Finance:** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

**Fiscal Policy:** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable

tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

**Gun Control:** Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

**Voting Rights:** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

### II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.

**Arms Control:** Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

**Military Policy and Defense Spending:** Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

**Trade:** Support systematic reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

**United Nations:** Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

**US Relations with Developing Countries:** Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

### III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

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

**Environmental Protection and Pollution Control:** Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with the maximum protection of the public health and environment.

**Public Participation:** Promote public understanding and participation in decision-making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

#### IV. SOCIAL POLICY

Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.

**Child Care:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

**Early Intervention for Children at Risk:** Support policies and programs that promote the well being, development and safety of children.

**Equality of Opportunity:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**Health Care:** Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

**Meeting Basic Human Needs:** Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Urban Policy:** Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

**Violence Prevention:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well-defined channels for citizen input and review.

For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see *Impact on Issues, 1994-96* (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

### JUDICIARY

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.
- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

### CORRECTIONS

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

### Adult Corrections Position Details

#### Support of:

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

### Juvenile Justice Position Details

#### Support of:

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.

- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

### Sentencing Position Details

#### Support of:

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.
- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - ⇒ the need for drug counseling;
  - ⇒ whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - ⇒ academic training of the offender;
  - ⇒ need for psychiatric treatment;
  - ⇒ restitution when appropriate;
  - ⇒ the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - ⇒ resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, good time, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982 the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983. League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in

support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

**EDUCATION**

*(See Social Policy section for additional positions.)*

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

**LWVMN Position:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

**Details**

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

**FINANCING OF EDUCATION**

**LWVMN Position:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Details****Support of:**

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
  - ⇒ provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983); until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes; (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP); (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: scarcity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation; (1991)
  - ⇒ using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding; (1983)
  - ⇒ encouragement of financial efficiencies; (1983)
  - ⇒ requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the state Department of Education; (1991)
  - ⇒ allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability; (1983)
  - ⇒ reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments; (1983)
  - ⇒ the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue; (1991)
  - ⇒ maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many. (1983)

**Opposition to:**

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction; (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

## Details

*Support of:*

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - ⇒ require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - ⇒ require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - ⇒ allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.
- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - ⇒ require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - ⇒ retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - ⇒ require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

## LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

## Details

*Support of:*

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions--85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal--to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.
- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

In 1980 LWVMN published *What's the Score in Minnesota*, a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools. In 1995 and 1996 LWVMN joined several other organizations in a letter to the Legislature opposing making danceline an interscholastic sport.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988 we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

**Finance:** During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989, we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts.

In 1987, the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a "general revenue formula." LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented (which were folded into a "categorical reserve" to be used for one or all of the formerly categorical programs) would be lost without dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education. In 1996 the LWVMN actively opposed school vouchers for K-12 education;

the League believes the focus of state resources should be on continuing to improve the system that serves all children.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs. Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

**Library Funding:** In 1985 LWVMN supported increased funding for public libraries in Minnesota and supported the four goals of the Minnesota Long range Plan for library services.

**GOVERNMENT**

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures..*

**I. CITIZEN RIGHTS**

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

**PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES**

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

**Citizen Rights:** In 1995 the LWVMN was a member of the Information Access Policy Discussion group which sponsored legislation to make it easier to access information via the rapidly emerging cable and phone line technology.

In 1996 LWVMN was very involved in a debate to continue the dual-track airport planning process so that citizen groups could provide input to the decision process. Legislation to abort the process was successful, despite League efforts.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choice:** LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota. During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's Prevention, Not Prohibition campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 League's efforts were focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion. In 1995 the League was involved in deleting an amendment called the Woman's Right to Know from the Welfare Reform Bill. During the 1996 session the LWVMN closely tracked over 35 anti-choice bills waiting to attach as amendments to other legislation.

**ELECTION LAWS**

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

**Details***Support of:*

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973 an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

In 1995 the League was asked to provide testimony on elections to the Election Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. The League testified on what is right and wrong with the current election process and the general position on elections and the campaign process. The Grove Commission, an 18-member bipartisan commission of which LWVMN President, Kay Erickson, was a member, published its report on Electoral Reform.

During the 1995 session the League testified in support of appropriating money to produce and mail 3 voter guides: to the caucus, to the primary and to the general election. The League assured the legislators that such guides can be produced in a non-partisan way, in a manner similar to our production of voter guides, and offered to produce the guides. Unfortunately, funding was not forthcoming.

In 1996 the LWVMN supported an unsuccessful attempt to authorize mail ballots in special elections for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter turnout.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Presidential Primary:** In 1991 the League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly." A primary was held in 1992, with League support and involvement at the polls. However, due to an insufficient voter turnout a primary was not held in 1996.

**Term Limits:** LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local office holders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the ballot.

In 1995 the League voiced its strong opposition to both national and state efforts to adopt term limits legislation. As an alternative to term limits, the League supported successful legislation to rotate committee chairs. Limiting the number of years a member can be chair allows new ideas.

# HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

**Handicapped Access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

### Details

#### Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973 LWVMN worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board (EPB), and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983 the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary

# HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). A candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, receives a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and would not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fund-raisers during a regular legislative session.

During the 1995 session LWVMN lobbied hard to keep the current ethics law, and in the end was successful. There were several attempts to weaken the laws passed the previous year. In particular an attempt to create a loophole was monitored by League lobbyists.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993 LWVMN supported action by the legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fund-raisers during legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10%. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

In 1996, in conjunction with Common Cause, local leagues lobbied U.S. representatives in support of HR 2566, a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill in the House of Representatives: voluntary spending limits; reduced cost ways for candidates to communicate with the public; controls on "soft-money" contributions; limits on large individual contributions; and cuts in the amount of PAC donations.

## OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

*LWVUS Position:* Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the Board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute.

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

*LWVUS Positions:* Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

*LWVMN Position:* Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - ⇒ compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - ⇒ public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - ⇒ prompt judicial review. (1979)

### III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

#### Details

##### Support of:

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - ⇒ time span for collecting signatures;
  - ⇒ eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - ⇒ percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - ⇒ size of vote required for passage;
  - ⇒ procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - ⇒ contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

##### Opposition to:

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees continues to improve, although reducing the

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. The 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district.

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** LWVMN opposed a constitutional amendment proposed in the 1980 general election that would have provided for initiative and referendum. The League joined a coalition, Citizens for Representative Government, and formed a ballot issues fund to finance the opposition campaign. The amendment was defeated since it did not receive a majority of the votes cast in the election even though pre-election polls indicated it was supported by 75 to 80% of the electorate.

The League Action Committee and the State Board reiterated its 1979 position against recall. A bill, including enabling legislation, passed during the 1996 session, to place on the November ballot a question to include recall as part of the constitution.

### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support of long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

##### Support of:

- a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees.
- the following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
  - ⇒ **Competitiveness:** Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of

economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness.

- ⇒ **Efficiency:** Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated.
- ⇒ **Equity:** Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances.
- ⇒ **Progressivity:** Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes.
- ⇒ **Reliability:** Provides a stable source of revenue.
- ⇒ **Responsiveness:** Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth.
- ⇒ **Simplicity:** Is understandable to the taxpayer.
- a progressive individual income tax with a graduated rate schedule.
- a broad-based retail sales tax with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons.
- the use of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education. (See the Financing Education position.)
- a corporation franchise tax which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. The LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state.
- the use of other sources of revenue, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system.
- achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
  1. Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system;
  2. Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving the intended purpose;
  3. Reviewed periodically to justify continuance.
- the distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
  - ⇒ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
  - ⇒ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.

- ⇒ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
- ⇒ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance that equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.
- ⇒ Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.

- the principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources.
- long-term financial management of all state government funds.
- long-term projections of revenue and expenditures should be considered when making budget decisions.
- an adequate budget reserve should be established during good economic times to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Since the mid '50s the LWVMN has studied the financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support of property tax reform. In 1969 LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979 this position and the existence of a state surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by indexing income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation and attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980s.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which began to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state funded income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

LWVMN supported the bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

The 1995 LWVMN Board adopted a new position on Financing State Government. In 1995 the LWVMN convention adopted a new study on Minnesota State Spending.

**V. FIREARMS**

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

**LWVMN Position: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)**

**Details***Support of:*

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

*Opposition to:*

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed which requires adults store loaded weapons away from children and enhanced penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

The League, as part of Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, lobbied unsuccessfully in 1996 to raise the age from 14 to 18 as the threshold for adults to store loaded weapons away from children.

In 1993 LWVMN leadership and lobbyists successfully lobbied members of Congress for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort. In 1995, League lobbied their representatives to stop the repeal of the Brady Bill.

League lobbyists were active in opposition to a proposal to place a "Right to Bear Arms" amendment on the ballot. LWVMN worked to counteract the NRA's argument that the Second Amendment gives everyone the right to own a weapon. Leaguers pointed out that the Supreme Court has ruled 6 times that the Second Amendment only deals with state militias -- not an individual's right to own arms.

In 1996 the League actively lobbied against an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Bill which would ease the restrictions to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)**

## WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

### Details

*Support of:*

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:
  - ⇒ recognize regional differences in supply and use.
  - ⇒ integrate both ground and surface water management.
  - ⇒ integrate quality and quantity management.
  - ⇒ provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
  - ⇒ consider future use (of water resources).
  - ⇒ promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
  - ⇒ provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
  - ⇒ distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - ⇒ continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - ⇒ provide for education and technical assistance.
  - ⇒ require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects, future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - ⇒ Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.

- ⇒ federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
- ⇒ interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
- ⇒ increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission proceedings.

## SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

### Details

*Support of:*

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

## LAND USE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

### Details

*Support a state plan that should:*

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances.

- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979 emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN has used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) on determining direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

In 1995 the League closely monitored some legislators attempts to relax Wetlands restrictions. The session ended without changes. In 1996 the LWVMN actively participated with the Wetlands Coalition to monitor the changes to the Wetlands Protection Act. The League wanted to keep the "no-net loss" policy on drainage ditch repair and construction..

**Air:** In 1971 LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976 LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981 LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act; a bill passed in 1990. In 1982 LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulfur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legislation creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982 the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN, in coalition with other environmental groups, made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

In 1977 LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste is used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

From 1990 to 1993 LWVMN continued to support legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS's seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984 when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

LWVMN opposed the Northern State Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility based on Minnesota Statute Sec. 116C.72, which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975 LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

**Energy:** In 1977 LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

### CHILD SUPPORT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

### CHILD PROTECTION

**LWVMN Position:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.
- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.

- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

### CHILD HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

### CHILD CARE

**LWVUS Position:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.
- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

### III. HOUSING

**LWVMN Position:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

#### Details

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low- and moderate- incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

##### *Support revising the tax system to:*

- narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;
- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households;
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

#### IV. HEALTH CARE

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See 'National Program At a Glance' for full position.)

#### V. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

##### Details

##### *Support of:*

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

#### VI. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

**LWVUS Position:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**LWVMN Position:** Support for violence prevention programs in our community.

##### Details

##### *Support of:*

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - ⇒ government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes;
  - ⇒ local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula;
  - ⇒ use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
  - ⇒ training for childcare providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- the use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence.
- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s LWVMN continued investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977 members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973 LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature.

Since 1975 LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983 the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other anti-discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation. A LWVMN lobbyist served on Governor Carlson's 1994 task force on gays and lesbians, instrumental in passing the Human Rights Amendment.

***Merging National and State Positions on Equality of***

***Opportunity:*** The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967 LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief. The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978 LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983 LWVMN supported pay equity legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law. During the 1990 session LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

In 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969 LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

***Child Support:*** In 1982 Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

***Child Protection, Health and Child Care:*** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level. League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In a coalition the League helped to found (Child Care WORKS), LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

The League supported a proposal to expand the basic sliding fee program to subsidize low- and middle-income Minnesotans who pay childcare expenses. The bill was incorporated into the Omnibus Human Services legislation. The League lobbied for the appropriation of money for crisis nurseries and home visiting programs. Incorporated in a 1996 crime prevention bill the nurseries and home visits provide early intervention in abusive situations, recognizing that the number one indicator of criminal behavior is child abuse.

***Teenage Pregnancy:*** In 1988 Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. LWVMN testified in 1994 for the inclusion in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill for money to fund a program to teach male responsibility to teen fathers.

***Health Care:*** The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's HealthRight legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions. LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; and reform now.

The League concentrated its health care lobbying efforts in 1995 to prevent the erosion of the 1994 MinnesotaCare bill and to seek funding for universal coverage, a LWVMN goal to achieve by Jan. 1, 1997.

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

**Housing:** LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate- income people to live near the new entry level jobs opening up in the outer ring suburbs.

**Mental Health:** The LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to community-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

In 1995 the League provided testimony in support of a bill to create delivery system pilots which would pool the resources of regional treatment centers with community dollars. In 1996 the League lobbied successfully for the continued funding for five Coordinated Employment Projects whose funding would run out on January 1, 1997. The projects provide job counseling for persons with mental illness.

**Prevention of Violence:** In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates state-wide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were

**HISTORY OF STATE ACTION (continued)**

introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967 and 1976 legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators. In 1971 and 1973 LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools. In 1984 and 1985 LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985 LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians. In 1996 a fifth edition is being prepared.

In the 1993 session LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement regarding the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band. Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwa, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement was sent to trial. In August 1994 the Court ruled on Phase 1 in the Band's favor to allow tribal and modern method fishing and hunting. A trial on Phase 2 of the case, as to what percentage of the resources the Bands are entitled to, is due to begin in September 1996.

## COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental problems of metropolitan concern.*

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**CMAL Position:** Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)

## Details

### CMAL supports:

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

## HOUSING

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

## HEALTH

**CMAL Position:** Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them. Since its inception the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION (continued)

urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975 CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977 CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Housing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982, 1983 and 1993 CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers — the implementors of policy plans adopted by the Council.

## FUNDING/FINANCING

### FISCAL DISPARITIES

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970)

## FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

## Details

### CMAL supports:

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - ⇒ uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.

- ⇒ a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - ⇒ the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - ⇒ regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - ⇒ regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - ⇒ responsible administrative procedures.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971 CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, “The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area,” reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, “Fiscal Disparities: An Overview,” appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly. The CMAL is currently reviewing the issue, with consensus due in May, 1997, titled “Re-Study of Fiscal; Disparities”.

In 1975 CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council’s Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the solution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

### SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

**CMAL Position:** Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

### HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local “Blueprint for Action.” (1989)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

### LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment; (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

### Details

#### CMAL supports

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

## ENVIRONMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

**CMAL Position:** Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities.
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans.
- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority.
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

## SOLID WASTE

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION (continued)

**Water Resources:** In 1975 CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Mississippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metropolitan Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines. CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply. Their report, Water Supply: A Regional Perspective, was released in January 1995.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985 CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes. Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975 the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977 CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978 CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979 CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

## TRANSPORTATION

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.

- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969) which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971) which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time.

In 1985 CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board, which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

#### COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**CMAL Position: Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)**

#### Details

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - ⇒ public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - ⇒ systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.
  - ⇒ creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county

board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.

- ⇒ regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
- ⇒ full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementors, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

In 1973 CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications: CMAL'S Seven Counties in Transition: A Study of the Evolving Role of the County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, Hennepin County.

In 1982-83 CMAL supported counties as implementors of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

*May 1996*

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# **Program for Action 1997-99**

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League--national, state or local--Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other Program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1995-97 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in boldface);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section; and
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1996-98 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

League Principles are as follows:

- 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 which 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; 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

#### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and insure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** Support of equal access to a good public education for all Minnesota children.. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments;

opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on broad-based taxes and user fees. Support of an evaluation of all individual revenue sources to determine if it is competitive with other states, efficient, equitable, progressive, reliable, responsive and simple. Support of a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for essential items. Support of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing services provided by local governments and a partial funding for education. Support of a corporation franchise tax competitive with other states. Support of achieving social goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. Support of the principle that state legislation mandating local government action should identify sources of revenue. Support of long-term financial management, budget projections and budget reserve.

**State Government Spending:** Belief that a long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. Support of the following broad goals, in order of priority: provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities; provide basic level of health and human services; protect natural resources; encourage economic self-sufficiency; provide for public safety; provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities; and preserve open spaces. Support of the use of specific criteria when faced with the need to limit spending, i.e. curtailing subsidies for sports teams and convention centers, maintenance of existing infrastructure over increased infrastructure, tax relief targeted to low-income households and providing services first to the most needy.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to insure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens

##### FAMILY ISSUES

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Housing:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing. Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support of incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of revision of the tax system to narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner-occupied residential property; reduction of the tax rate on rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households; encouragement of maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

### **Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States**

#### **I. GOVERNMENT**

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.**

##### **Agricultural Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

##### **Citizen Rights**

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

##### **Individual Liberties**

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

##### **Public Policy on Reproductive Choices**

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

##### **Congress and the Presidency**

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

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

#### **DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation**

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

##### **Election Process**

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

**Campaign Finance:** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

##### **Fiscal Policy**

Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

##### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

##### **Voting Rights**

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

#### **II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.**

##### **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

##### **Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

### **Trade**

Support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

### **United Nations**

Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

### **U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## **III. NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.**

### **Resource Management**

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

### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**

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

### **Public Participation**

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

## **IV. SOCIAL POLICY**

**Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children, and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.**

### **Child Care**

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

### **Early Intervention for Children at Risk**

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

### **Equality of Opportunity**

Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

### **Health Care**

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.

### **Meeting Basic Human Needs**

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

### **Urban Policy**

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

### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:**

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well defined channels for citizen input and review.

*For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see Impact on Issues, 1996-98 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).*

### **1996-98 ISSUE FOR EMPHASIS**

- **Making Democracy Work**

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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### **JUDICIARY**

**LWVMN Position: Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.**

#### **Details**

*Support of:*

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.

- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

## CORRECTIONS

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

### Adult Corrections Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and

society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.

- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

### Juvenile Justice Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.
- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

### Sentencing Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.

- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - ⇒ the need for drug counseling;
  - ⇒ whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - ⇒ academic training of the offender;
  - ⇒ need for psychiatric treatment;
  - ⇒ restitution when appropriate;
  - ⇒ the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - ⇒ resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, time off for good behavior, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982 the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983. League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

The League adopted at the 1997 convention a study of the election of judges in Minnesota. The goal of the study is to examine the present system and look at alternative proposals for appointing judges. The study will educate League members in how the system now functions and how it might be improved.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

#### EDUCATION

(See Social Policy section for additional positions.)

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVMN Position:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

##### Details

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

#### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

**LWVMN Position:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

##### Details

##### Support of:

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
  - ⇒ provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983); until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes; (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP); (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: scarcity, training and

- experience, desegregation and transportation; (1991)
- ⇒ using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding; (1983)
- ⇒ encouragement of financial efficiencies; (1983)
- ⇒ requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the state Department of Education; (1991)
- ⇒ allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability; (1983)
- ⇒ reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments; (1983)
- ⇒ the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue; (1991)
- ⇒ maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many. (1983)

*Opposition to:*

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction; (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position: Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.**

### Details

*Support of:*

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - ⇒ require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - ⇒ require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - ⇒ allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.

- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - ⇒ require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - ⇒ retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - ⇒ require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

## LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.**

### Details

*Support of:*

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions--85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal--to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account

square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.

- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

In 1980 LWVMN published *What's the Score in Minnesota*, a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools. In 1995 and 1996 LWVMN joined several other organizations in a letter to the Legislature opposing making danceline an interscholastic sport.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988 we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

**Finance:** During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the

formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989, we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts.

In 1987, the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a "general revenue formula." LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented (which were folded into a "categorical reserve" to be used for one or all of the formerly categorical programs) would be lost without dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education. In 1996 the LWVMN actively opposed school vouchers for K-12 education; the League believes the focus of state resources should be on continuing to improve the system that serves all children.

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs.

Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

The League lobbied in 1997 in support of legislation to expand programs for reading readiness. The bill required early reading instruction to be a mandatory part of curriculum for teacher candidates and provided challenge grants to schools for early intervention reading instruction. The legislation was rolled into the Omnibus Education Finance bill.

The 1997 bill was vetoed by the Governor because it did not include his requested increase in tax deductions and tax credit for education expenses. The League contacted the Governor urging him to sign the bill. A special session convened in June 1997 passed a bill including tax credits and doubling deductions for private school tuition.

**Library Funding:** In 1985 LWVMN supported increased funding for public libraries in Minnesota and supported the four goals of the Minnesota Long range Plan for library services.

## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.*

### I. CITIZEN RIGHTS

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

### PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Citizen Rights:** In 1995 the LWVMN was a member of the Information Access Policy Discussion group which sponsored legislation to make it easier to access information via the rapidly emerging cable and phone line technology.

In 1996 LWVMN was very involved in a debate to continue the dual-track airport planning process so that citizen groups could provide input to the decision process. Legislation to abort the process was successful, despite League efforts.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choice:** LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota.

During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's Prevention, Not Prohibition campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 League's efforts were

focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion.

In 1995 the League was involved in deleting an amendment called the Woman's Right to Know from the Welfare Reform Bill.

During the 1996 session the LWVMN closely tracked over 35 anti-choice bills waiting to attach as amendments to other legislation.

## ELECTION LAWS

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

### Details

*Support of:*

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973 an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

In 1995 the League was asked to provide testimony on elections to the Election Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. The League testified on what is right and wrong with the current election process and the general position on elections and the campaign process. The Grove Commission, an 18-member bipartisan commission of

which LWVMN President, Kay Erickson, was a member, published its report on Electoral Reform.

During the 1995 session the League testified in support of appropriating money to produce and mail 3 voter guides: to the caucus, to the primary and to the general election. The League assured the legislators that such guides can be produced in a non-partisan way, in a manner similar to our production of voter guides, and offered to produce the guides. Unfortunately, funding was not forthcoming.

In 1996 the LWVMN supported an unsuccessful attempt to authorize mail ballots in special elections for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter turnout.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Presidential Primary:** In 1991 the League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly." A primary was held in 1992, with League support and involvement at the polls. However, due to an insufficient voter turnout a primary was not held in 1996.

**Term Limits:** LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local officeholders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the ballot.

In 1995 the League voiced its strong opposition to both national and state efforts to adopt term limits legislation. As an alternative to term limits, the League supported successful legislation to rotate committee chairs. Limiting the number of years a member can be chair allows new ideas.

**Handicapped Access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

### Details

#### Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973 we worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board (EPB), and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983 the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). A candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, receives a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and would not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fund-raisers during a regular legislative session.

During the 1995 session LWVMN lobbied hard to keep the current ethics law, and in the end was successful. There were several attempts to weaken the laws passed the previous year. In

particular an attempt to create a loophole was monitored by League lobbyists.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993 LWVMN supported action by the legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fund-raisers during legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10%. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

In 1996, in conjunction with Common Cause, local leagues lobbied US representatives in support of HR 2566, a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill in the House of Representatives: voluntary spending limits; reduced cost ways for candidates to communicate with the public; controls on "soft-money" contributions; limits on large individual contributions; and cuts in the amount of PAC donations.

The League issued a statement in 1997 regarding our position on campaign finance reform measures considered in Congress.

LWVMNEF moderated a town meeting on campaign finance (attended by Senator Wellstone, Representatives Gutknecht, Ramstad, Luther and Vento), where the League was able to present our position directly to some of our elected officials.

At the state level, LWVMN lobbied against the relaxation of a gift ban included in campaign reform legislation passed in 1994. We urged legislators to avoid the perception of undue influence at a time when the public is asking for continued reform.

## OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

**LWVUS Position:** Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know.

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the Board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute. LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

**LWVUS Position:** Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - ⇒ compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - ⇒ public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - ⇒ prompt judicial review. (1979)

### III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - ⇒ time span for collecting signatures;
  - ⇒ eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - ⇒ percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - ⇒ size of vote required for passage;
  - ⇒ procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - ⇒ contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

##### *Opposition to:*

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees continues to improve, although reducing the number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. The 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district.

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be

passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** LWVMN opposed a constitutional amendment proposed in the 1980 general election that would have provided for initiative and referendum. The League joined a coalition, Citizens for Representative Government, and formed a ballot issues fund to finance the opposition campaign. The amendment was defeated since it did not receive a majority of the votes cast in the election even though pre-election polls indicated it was supported by 75 to 80% of the electorate.

The League Action Committee and the State Board reiterated its 1979 position against recall. A bill, including enabling legislation, passed during the 1996 session, to place on the November ballot a question to include recall as part of the constitution.

#### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support of long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

##### *Support of:*

- a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees.
- the following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
  - ⇒ **Competitiveness:** Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness.
  - ⇒ **Efficiency:** Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated.
  - ⇒ **Equity:** Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances.

- ⇒ **Progressivity:** Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes.
- ⇒ **Reliability:** Provides a stable source of revenue.
- ⇒ **Responsiveness:** Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth.
- ⇒ **Simplicity:** Is understandable to the taxpayer.

- a progressive **individual income tax** with a graduated rate schedule.
- a broad-based **retail sales tax** with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons.
- the use of an equitable **property tax** as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education. (See the Financing Education position.)
- a **corporation franchise tax** which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. The LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state.
- the use of **other sources of revenue**, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system.
- achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
  1. Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system;
  2. Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving the intended purpose;
  3. Reviewed periodically to justify continuance.
- the distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
  - ⇒ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
  - ⇒ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
  - ⇒ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
  - ⇒ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance that equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.

⇒ Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.

- the principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources.
- long-term financial management of all state government funds.
- long-term projections of revenue and expenditures should be considered when making budget decisions.
- an adequate budget reserve should be established during good economic times to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services.

#### **HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

Since the mid '50s the LWVMN has studied the financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support of property tax reform. In 1969 LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979 this position and the existence of a state surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by indexing income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation and attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980s.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which began to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state funded income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements. LWVMN supported the bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

## **V. GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

### **I. Broad Goals**

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns

should guide state spending decisions. The League strongly supports the following broad goals: (by priority)

1. Provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans;
2. Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans;
3. Protect the state's natural environment;
4. Encourage economic self-sufficiency;
5. Provide for the public safety;
6. Provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Minnesotans; and
7. Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).

LWVMN also supports the following goals:

1. Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth;
2. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit;
3. Create a business climate that will allow MN businesses to compete nationally and internationally; and
4. Ensure timely resolution of court cases.

LWVMN does not support the goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

### **Spending Priorities**

LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are the following:

1. K-12 (regular) education,
2. Health Care, and
3. Environmental protection.

When considering specific proposals requiring choices, the League believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others.

### **Relative Priority**

Regular education over vocational education

Vocational education over special education

Special education over community education and recreation

Health care and family support over nursing home care

Environmental protection over parks and recreation

Roads and transit over highway patrol

Job-related economic security over business incentives

Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and

Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)

HACA over Local Government Aid

The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions

## **III. Criteria for Limiting Spending**

When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria: (by priority)

1. State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed;
2. Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure;
3. Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes;
4. Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens; and
5. Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility.

The League opposes the following:

1. Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds;
2. Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services;
3. Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition; and
4. Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children.

#### IV. Efficiency

The League supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services. To this end, the League strongly supports:

1. Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems,
2. Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation.

The League also supports:

1. Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance;
2. Giving government employees more flexibility and incentive to manage the way they do their jobs;
3. Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results; and
4. Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota does not support providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education.

## VI. FIREARMS

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

**LWVMN Position:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)

## Details

### *Support of:*

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

### *Opposition to:*

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed which requires adults store loaded weapons away from children and enhanced penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

The League, as part of Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, lobbied unsuccessfully in 1996 to raise the age from 14 to 18 as the threshold for adults to store loaded weapons away from children.

In 1993 LWVMN leadership and lobbyists successfully lobbied members of Congress for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort. In 1995, League lobbied their representatives to stop the repeal of the Brady Bill.

League lobbyists were active in opposition to a proposal to place a "Right to Bear Arms" amendment on the ballot. LWVMN worked to counteract the NRA's argument that the Second Amendment gives everyone the right to own a weapon. Leaguers pointed out that the Supreme Court has ruled 6 times that the Second Amendment only deals with state militias -- not an individual's right to own arms.

In 1996 the League actively lobbied against an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Bill which would ease the restrictions to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

During the 1997 session the League closely followed two bills proposing a weakening of the concealed weapon legislation. Neither bill actually passed out of committee, but threatened to be attached as an amendment to other legislation. Leaguers interested in firearms issues were ready to take action, but in the end, the amendments were unsuccessful.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

## WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

### Details

*Support of:*

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility

for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:

- ⇒ recognize regional differences in supply and use.
- ⇒ integrate both ground and surface water management.
- ⇒ integrate quality and quantity management.
- ⇒ provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
- ⇒ consider future use (of water resources).
- ⇒ promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
- ⇒ provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
- ⇒ distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.

- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - ⇒ continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - ⇒ provide for education and technical assistance.
  - ⇒ require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects, future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - ⇒ Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
  - ⇒ federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
  - ⇒ interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
  - ⇒ increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission process

## SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

## LAND USE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

### Details

#### *Support of a state plan that should:*

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances

- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979 emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN has used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) on determining direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

In 1995 the League closely monitored some legislators attempts to relax Wetlands restrictions. The session ended without changes. In 1996 the LWVMN actively participated with the Wetlands Coalition to monitor the changes to the Wetlands Protection Act. The League wanted to keep the "no-net loss" policy on drainage ditch repair and construction..

**Air:** In 1971 LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976 LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981 LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act; a bill passed in 1990. In 1982 LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulfur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legislation creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982 the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN, in coalition with other environmental groups, made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

In 1977 LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes. During the 1989 session LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A

portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste is used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

From 1990 to 1993 LWVMN continued to support legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS' seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984 when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

LWVMN opposed the Northern State Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility based on Minnesota Statute Sec. 116C.72, which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975 LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

In 1997 the League lobbied for mandatory state planning which would require the units of government to coordinate their plans with neighboring communities. A softer version of the bill was passed, merely recommending planning and providing assistance to those localities who choose to do it.

**Energy:** In 1977 LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

### CHILD SUPPORT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

### CHILD PROTECTION

**LWVMN Position:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.

- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.
- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

### CHILD HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

### CHILD CARE

**LWVUS Position:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.

- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

### III. HOUSING

**LWVMN Position:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

#### Details

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low- and moderate- incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

Support revising the tax system to:

- narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;
- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households;
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

### IV. HEALTH CARE

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See 'National Program At a Glance' for full position.)

### V. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

## VI. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

**LWVUS Position:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**LWVMN Position:** Support for violence prevention programs in our community.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - ⇒ government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes;
  - ⇒ local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula;
  - ⇒ use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
  - ⇒ training for child care providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- the use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence.
- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s LWVMN continued

investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977 members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973 LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature.

Since 1975 LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983 the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other anti-discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation.. A LWVMN lobbyist served on Governor Carlson's 1994 task force on gays and lesbians, instrumental in passing the Human Rights Amendment.

**Merging National and State Positions on Equality of Opportunity:** The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967 LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief.

The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978 LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983 LWVMN supported pay equity legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law.

During the 1990 session LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee

Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

In 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969 LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

**Family Violence:** The league lobbied for legislation incorporated in a 1996 crime prevention bill to fund nurseries and home visits. The visits provide early intervention in abusive situations, recognizing that the number one indicator of criminal behavior is child abuse.

**Child Support:** In 1982 Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

**Child Protection:** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level.

**Child Health:** League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In 1997, the League strongly supported a bill to restrict the sale of tobacco to minors by licensing retailers and setting criteria for display of tobacco products. The legislation was passed and signed into law.

**Child Care:** In a coalition the League helped to found Child Care WORKS, LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

The League supported a proposal to expand the basic sliding fee program to subsidize low- and middle-income Minnesotans who pay child care expenses. The bill was incorporated into the Omnibus Human Services legislation. The League lobbied for the appropriation of money for crisis nurseries and home visiting programs.

In 1997, the League successfully lobbied for expansion of child care in the welfare reform legislation. One provision of the package was to exempt parents with babies under one year from the immediate work requirements. The parents will receive a portion of the child care subsidy and be allowed to stay at home with their infant.

**Teenage Pregnancy:** In 1988 Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. LWVMN testified in 1994 for the inclusion in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill for money to fund a program to teach male responsibility to teen fathers.

**Housing:** LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate- income people to live near the new entry level jobs opening up in the outer ring suburbs.

In 1997 the League followed with interest legislation to increase affordable rental housing through no-interest mortgages or deferred loans. The program received \$16.4 million for the biennium.

**Health Care:** The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's HealthRight legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions.

LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; and reform now.

The League concentrated its health care lobbying efforts in 1995 to prevent the erosion of the 1994 MinnesotaCare bill and to seek funding for universal coverage, a LWVMN goal to achieve by Jan. 1, 1997.

The League took action on several health care issues in 1997, including a Prescription Drug Fair Competition bill to negotiate lower drug prices for independent pharmacies. The Governor used a line item veto to eliminate the funding to allow the Department of Administration to negotiate on behalf of the pharmacies. Also, a weakened Patient Protection Act passed and was signed. We had hoped the bill would include an independent appeals process and a strong patient advocacy program., but it certainly is a good beginning.

**Mental Health:** The LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to community-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

In 1995 the League provided testimony in support of a bill to create delivery system pilots which would pool the resources of regional treatment centers with community dollars. In 1996 the League lobbied successfully for the continued funding for five Coordinated Employment Projects whose funding would run out on January 1, 1997. The projects provide job counseling for persons with mental illness. In 1997, the League lobbied for the additional employability projects whose funding runs out in 1998.

Bridges, a temporary housing program for persons with mental illness, was expanded in the 1997 after strong lobbying from the League. Other mental health issues that arose during the 1997 session included a cost of living increase for mental health employees, and additional funding for the relocation of Regional Treatment Centers staff into community services.

Legislation to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Civil Commitment Task Force was successful in 1997. Funding was made available for a civil commitment training and resource center.

**Prevention of Violence:** In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates state-wide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967 and 1976 legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators.

In 1971 and 1973 LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools.

In 1984 and 1985 LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985 LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians. In 1997 a fifth edition is being prepared.

In the 1993 session LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement regarding the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band.

Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwe, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement was sent to trial. The federal Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of the band following an appeal by the State of Minnesota of the federal district court's ruling also in the band's favor.

## COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.*

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**CMAL Position:** Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time

as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

## HOUSING

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

## HEALTH

**CMAL Position:** Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them.

Since its inception the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975 CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977 CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Housing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982, 1983 and 1993 CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and

task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers — the implementors of policy plans adopted by the Council.

In 1997 a bill to elect the Metropolitan Council passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.

## FUNDING/FINANCING

### FISCAL DISPARITIES

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970) The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997) Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

### FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports:*

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - ⇒ uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - ⇒ the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - ⇒ regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - ⇒ regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - ⇒ responsible administrative procedures.

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971 CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the

courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, "The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area," reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, "Fiscal Disparities: An Overview," appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly. The CMAL reviewed the issue, in 1997 and completed a study, "Re-Study of Fiscal Disparities".

In 1975 CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council's Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the solution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

### SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

**CMAL Position:** Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

### HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action." (1989)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports:*

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

### LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment; (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports*

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

### ENVIRONMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

**CMAL Position:** Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports:*

- water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities.
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited

water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans.

- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority.
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

### SOLID WASTE

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

**Water Resources:** In 1975 CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Mississippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metropolitan Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines. CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply. Their report, Water Supply: A Regional Perspective, was released in January 1995.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985 CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes.

Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975 the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977 CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978 CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979 CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

### TRANSPORTATION

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)

#### Details

*CMAL supports:*

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969) which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971) which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time.

In 1985 CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board (RTB), which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)

### Details

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - ⇒ public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - ⇒ systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.

- ⇒ creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.
- ⇒ regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
- ⇒ full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementors, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

In 1973 CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications: CMAL'S Seven Counties in Transition: A Study of the Evolving Role of the County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, Hennepin County.

In 1982-83 CMAL supported counties as implementors of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

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THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
MINNESOTA

# Program for Action 1999-2001

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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### *Program: Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League--national, state or local--Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other Program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1999-2001 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in boldface);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section; and
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1998-2000 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

League Principles are as follows:

- 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 which 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; 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

**Selection of Judges:** Support present system of selection and retention of appellate and district judges with certain modifications. Oppose allowing candidates to accept and use endorsement by political parties.

#### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and insure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** Support of equal access to a good public education for all Minnesota children.. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of regular and equitable reapportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments; and support voter approval by a majority of those voting on the question.

Oppose most forms of voter initiative and referendum and recall of members of the legislature and state constitutional officers.

Oppose term limits for members of the legislature and state constitutional officers.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on broad-based taxes and user fees. Support of an evaluation of all individual revenue sources to determine if it is competitive with other states, efficient, equitable, progressive, reliable, responsive and simple. Support of a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for essential items. Support of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing services provided by local governments and a partial funding for education. Support of a corporation franchise tax competitive with other states. Support of achieving social goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. Support of the principle that state legislation mandating local government action should identify sources of revenue. Support of long-term financial management, budget projections and budget reserve.

**State Government Spending:** Belief that a long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. Support of the following broad goals, in order of priority: provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities; provide basic level of health and human services; protect natural resources; encourage economic self-sufficiency; provide for public safety; provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities; and preserve open spaces. Support of the use of specific criteria when faced with the need to limit spending, i.e. curtailing subsidies for sports teams and convention centers, maintenance of existing infrastructure over increased infrastructure, tax relief targeted to low-income households and providing services first to the most needy.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

**Air Quality:** Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to insure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens

#### FAMILY ISSUES

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Housing:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing. Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support of incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of

revision of the tax system to narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner-occupied residential property; reduction of the tax rate on rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households; encouragement of maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

**Alcohol and Tobacco Use:** Support statutes, ordinances, enforcement efforts and public funding designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal use of alcohol and tobacco.

Support educational programs to improve chemical health and prevent illegal use of tobacco and alcohol starting in elementary school and continuing in middle and high school.

## **Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States**

### **I. GOVERNMENT**

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.**

#### **Agricultural Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

#### **Citizen Rights**

##### **Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation:**

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

#### **Individual Liberties**

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

#### **Public Policy on Reproductive Choices**

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

#### **Congress and the Presidency**

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

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

#### **DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation**

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

#### **Election Process**

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

**Campaign Finance:** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

#### **Fiscal Policy**

Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

#### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

#### **Voting Rights**

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

## II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.**

### **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

### **Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

### **Trade**

Support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

### **United Nations**

Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

### **U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## III. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.**

### **Resource Management**

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

### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**

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

### **Public Participation**

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

## IV. SOCIAL POLICY

**Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children, and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.**

### **Child Care**

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

### **Early Intervention for Children at Risk**

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

### **Equality of Opportunity**

Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

### **Health Care**

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.

### **Meeting Basic Human Needs**

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

### **Urban Policy**

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

### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:**

- **competent personnel with clear responsibilities;**
- **coordination among agencies and levels of government;**
- **adequate financing;**
- **effective enforcement;**
- **well defined channels for citizen input and review.**

*For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see Impact on Issues, 1996-98 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).*

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## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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### JUDICIARY

**LWVMN Position: Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.
- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

### CORRECTIONS

**LWVMN Position: Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.**

### Adult Corrections Position Details

##### *Support of:*

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.
- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

### Juvenile Justice Position Details

##### *Support of:*

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.

- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

### Sentencing Position Details

#### Support of:

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.
- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - ⇒ the need for drug counseling;
  - ⇒ whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - ⇒ academic training of the offender;
  - ⇒ need for psychiatric treatment;
  - ⇒ restitution when appropriate;
  - ⇒ the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - ⇒ resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, time off for good behavior, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

### SELECTION OF JUDGES

**LWVMN Position:** LWVMN supports the present system of selection and retention of appellate and district court judges with certain modifications. LWVMN strongly opposes allowing candidates for appellate and district judge to accept and use endorsements by political parties.

#### Details Selection of Judges

- A candidate for judge at the appellate or district court level should have at least five years experience as a practicing attorney;
- The state government should be required to publish voter information on all candidates running for judicial office;
- The governor should be required to appoint appellate and district court judges from among the nominees provided by the selection commission;

- LWVMN strongly favors retaining the incumbency designation on judicial ballots. (1999)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982 the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983. League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

The League adopted at the 1997 convention a study of the election of judges in Minnesota. The goal of the study is to examine the present system and look at alternative proposals for appointing judges. The study will educate League members in how the system now functions and how it might be improved.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

## EDUCATION

*(See Social Policy section for additional positions.)*

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVMN Position: Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.**

#### Details

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

**LWVMN Position: All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
  - ⇒ provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983); until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes; (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP); (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: scarcity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation; (1991)
  - ⇒ using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding; (1983)
  - ⇒ encouragement of financial efficiencies; (1983)
  - ⇒ requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the state Department of Education; (1991)
  - ⇒ allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through

local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability; (1983)

- ⇒ reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments; (1983)
- ⇒ the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue; (1991)
- ⇒ maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many. (1983)

##### *Opposition to:*

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction; (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position: Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - ⇒ require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - ⇒ require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - ⇒ allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.
- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - ⇒ require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - ⇒ retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - ⇒ require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the

district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.

- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

## LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position: Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.**

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions--85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal--to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.
- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

In 1980 LWVMN published What's the Score in Minnesota, a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools. In 1995 and 1996 LWVMN joined several other organizations in a letter to the Legislature opposing making danceline an interscholastic sport.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988 we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

**Finance:** During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989 we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts.

In 1987 the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a general revenue formula. LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented would be lost without the dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education. In 1996 the LWVMN actively opposed school vouchers for K-12 education; the League believes the focus of state resources should be on continuing to improve the system that serves all children.

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs.

Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

The League lobbied in 1997 in support of legislation to expand programs for reading readiness. The bill required early reading instruction to be a mandatory part of curriculum for teacher candidates and provided challenge grants to schools for early intervention reading instruction. The legislation was rolled into the Omnibus Education Finance bill.

The 1997 bill was vetoed by the Governor because it did not include his requested increase in tax deductions and tax credit for education expenses. The League contacted the Governor urging him to sign the bill. A special session convened in June 1997 passed a bill including tax credits and doubling deductions for private school tuition.

In 1998 LWVMN opposed a proposed voucher plan for students in K-12. The plan did not pass. The 1999 legislative session considered abolishing the Profiles of Learning which LWVMN cautioned would be a retreat from meaningful statewide standards. The proposal failed.

**Library Funding:** In 1985 LWVMN supported increased funding for public libraries in Minnesota and supported the four goals of the Minnesota Long range Plan for library services.

## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.*

## I. CITIZEN RIGHTS

**LWVUS Position: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)**

### PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

**LWVUS Position: Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)**

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Citizen Rights:** In 1995 the LWVMN was a member of the Information Access Policy Discussion group which sponsored legislation to make it easier to access information via the rapidly emerging cable and phone line technology.

In 1996 LWVMN was very involved in a debate to continue the dual-track airport planning process so that citizen groups could provide input to the decision process. Legislation to abort the process was successful, despite League efforts.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choice:** LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota.

During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's *Prevention. Not Prohibition* campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 League's efforts were focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion.

In 1995 the League was involved in deleting an amendment called the Woman's Right to Know from the Welfare Reform Bill. During the 1996 session the LWVMN closely tracked over 35 anti-choice bills waiting to attach as amendments to other legislation. Efforts to limit reproductive choice were proposed in both 1998 and 1999. LWVMN lobbied successfully against these proposals which were attached to important bills.

## ELECTION LAWS

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973 an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

In 1995 the League was asked to provide testimony on elections to the Election Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. The League testified on what is right and wrong with the current election process and the general position on elections and the campaign process. The Growe Commission, an 18-member bipartisan commission of which LWVMN President, Kay Erickson, was a member, published its report on Electoral Reform.

During the 1995 session the League testified in support of appropriating money to produce and mail 3 voter guides: to the caucus, to the primary and to the general election. The League assured the legislators that such guides can be produced in a non-partisan way, in a manner similar to our production of voter guides, and offered to produce the guides. Unfortunately, funding was not forthcoming.

In 1996 the LWVMN supported an unsuccessful attempt to authorize mail ballots in special elections for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter turnout.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Presidential Primary:** In 1991 the League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly." A primary was held in 1992, with League support and involvement at the polls. However, due to an insufficient voter turnout a primary was not held in 1996.

**Term Limits:** LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local officeholders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the ballot.

In 1995 the League voiced its strong opposition to both national and state efforts to adopt term limits legislation. As an alternative to term limits, the League supported successful legislation to rotate committee chairs. Limiting the number of years a member can be chair allows new ideas.

**Handicapped Access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures

by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)

- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973 we worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board (EPB), and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983 the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). A candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, receives a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and would not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fund-raisers during a regular legislative session.

During the 1995 session LWVMN lobbied hard to keep the current ethics law, and in the end was successful. There were several attempts to weaken the laws passed the previous year. In particular an attempt to create a loophole was monitored by League lobbyists.

The 1999 legislative session saw a renewed effort to relax the gift ban with other campaign finance changes. LWVMN testified in opposition and the measures failed to get out of conference committee. LWVMN supported a proposed measure to prohibit lobbying by former legislators for one year after leaving public office. The measure failed.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993 LWVMN supported action by the legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists

and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fund-raisers during legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10%. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off

system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

In 1996, in conjunction with Common Cause, local leagues lobbied US representatives in support of HR 2566, a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill in the House of Representatives: voluntary spending limits; reduced cost ways for candidates to communicate with the public; controls on "soft-money" contributions; limits on large individual contributions; and cuts in the amount of PAC donations.

The League issued a statement in 1997 regarding our position on campaign finance reform measures considered in Congress.

LWVMNEF moderated a town meeting on campaign finance (attended by Senator Wellstone, Representatives Gutknecht, Ramstad, Luther and Vento), where the League was able to present our position directly to some of our elected officials.

At the state level, LWVMN lobbied against the relaxation of a gift ban included in campaign reform legislation passed in 1994. We urged legislators to avoid the perception of undue influence at a time when the public is asking for continued reform.

#### OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

**LWVUS Position: Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)**

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the Board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting

where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute. LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

**LWVUS Position:** Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging

problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)

- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - ⇒ compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - ⇒ public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - ⇒ prompt judicial review. (1979)

## III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - ⇒ time span for collecting signatures;
  - ⇒ eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - ⇒ percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - ⇒ size of vote required for passage;
  - ⇒ procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - ⇒ contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

#### *Opposition to:*

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.

- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees continues to improve, although reducing the number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. The 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district.

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** LWVMN opposed a constitutional amendment proposed in the 1980 general election that would have provided for initiative and referendum. The League joined a coalition, Citizens for Representative Government, and formed a ballot issues fund to finance the opposition campaign. The amendment was defeated since it did not receive a majority of the votes cast in the election even though pre-election polls indicated it was supported by 75 to 80% of the electorate. In the 1999 session a constitutional amendment to establish Initiative and Referendum for both statutes and constitutional amendments passed the House but died in the Senate. LWVMN joined a coalition to defeat the amendment and will continue to monitor in 2000.

The League Action Committee and the State Board reiterated its 1979 position against recall. A bill, including enabling legislation, passed during the 1996 session, to place on the November ballot a question to include recall as part of the constitution.

#### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support of long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

##### *Support of:*

- a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees.
- the following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
  - ⇒ **Competitiveness:** Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness.
  - ⇒ **Efficiency:** Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated.
  - ⇒ **Equity:** Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances.
  - ⇒ **Progressivity:** Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes.
  - ⇒ **Reliability:** Provides a stable source of revenue.
  - ⇒ **Responsiveness:** Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth.
  - ⇒ **Simplicity:** Is understandable to the taxpayer.
- a progressive **individual income tax** with a graduated rate schedule.
- a broad-based **retail sales tax** with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons.
- the use of an equitable **property tax** as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education. (See the Financing Education position.)
- a **corporation franchise tax** which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. The LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state.
- the use of **other sources of revenue**, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system.
- achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions,

exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:

1. Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system;
  2. Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving the intended purpose;
  3. Reviewed periodically to justify continuance.
- the distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
    - ⇒ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
    - ⇒ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
    - ⇒ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
    - ⇒ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance that equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.
    - ⇒ Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.
  - the principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources.
  - long-term financial management of all state government funds.
  - long-term projections of revenue and expenditures should be considered when making budget decisions.
  - an adequate budget reserve should be established during good economic times to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Since the mid '50s the LWVMN has studied the financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support of property tax reform. In 1969 LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979 this position and the existence of a state surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by indexing income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation

and attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980s.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which began to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state funded income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements. LWVMN supported the bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

In 1999 the Legislature had to determine what to do with large surpluses. LWVMN lobbied the legislative leadership and the Governor to retain a healthy reserve and invest in long-range programs for Minnesota citizens rather than returning all the surpluses to the taxpayers. LWVMN also lobbied to use the one-time tobacco lawsuit funds for tobacco cessation and medical programs.

## V. GOVERNMENT SPENDING

### I. Broad Goals

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. The League strongly supports the following broad goals: (by priority)

1. Provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans;
2. Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans;
3. Protect the state's natural environment;
4. Encourage economic self-sufficiency;
5. Provide for the public safety;
6. Provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Minnesotans; and
7. Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).

LWVMN also supports the following goals:

1. Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth;
2. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit;
3. Create a business climate that will allow MN businesses to compete nationally and internationally; and
4. Ensure timely resolution of court cases.

LWVMN does not support the goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

### Spending Priorities

LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are the following:

1. K-12 (regular) education,
2. Health Care, and
3. Environmental protection.

When considering specific proposals requiring choices, the League believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others.

#### **Relative Priority**

Regular education over vocational education  
 Vocational education over special education  
 Special education over community education and recreation  
 Health care and family support over nursing home care  
 Environmental protection over parks and recreation  
 Roads and transit over highway patrol  
 Job-related economic security over business incentives  
 Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)  
 HACA over Local Government Aid  
 The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions

### **III. Criteria for Limiting Spending**

When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria: (by priority)

1. State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed;
2. Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure;
3. Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes;
4. Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens; and
5. Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility.

The League opposes the following:

1. Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds;
2. Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services;
3. Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition; and
4. Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children.

### **IV. Efficiency**

The League supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services. To this end, the League strongly supports:

1. Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems,
2. Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation.

The League also supports:

1. Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance;

2. Giving government employees more flexibility and incentive to manage the way they do their jobs;
3. Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results; and
4. Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota does not support providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education.

## **VI. FIREARMS**

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

***LWVMN Position: Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)***

#### **Details**

*Support of:*

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

*Opposition to:*

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed which requires adults store loaded weapons away from children and enhanced penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

The League, as part of Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, lobbied unsuccessfully in 1996 to raise the age from 14 to 18 as the threshold for adults to store loaded weapons away from children.

In 1993 LWVMN leadership and lobbyists successfully lobbied members of Congress for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort. In 1995, League lobbied their representatives to stop the repeal of the Brady Bill.

League lobbyists were active in opposition to a proposal to place a "Right to Bear Arms" amendment on the ballot. LWVMN worked to counteract the NRA's argument that the Second Amendment gives everyone the right to own a weapon. Leaguers pointed out that the Supreme Court has ruled 6 times that the Second Amendment only deals with state militias -- not an individual's right to own arms.

In 1996 the League actively lobbied against an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Bill which would ease the restrictions to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

During the 1997 session the League closely followed two bills proposing a weakening of the concealed weapon legislation. Neither bill actually passed out of committee, but threatened to be attached as an amendment to other legislation. Leaguers interested in firearms issues were ready to take action, but in the end, the amendments were unsuccessful.

In 1999 LWVMN lobbied successfully against an expanded right to carry concealed weapons and to limit local control of gun shop zoning.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

### WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

#### Details

##### Support of:

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:
  - ⇒ recognize regional differences in supply and use.
  - ⇒ integrate both ground and surface water management.
  - ⇒ integrate quality and quantity management.
  - ⇒ provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
  - ⇒ consider future use (of water resources).
  - ⇒ promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
  - ⇒ provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
  - ⇒ distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - ⇒ continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - ⇒ provide for education and technical assistance.
  - ⇒ require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects,

future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.

- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - ⇒ Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
  - ⇒ federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
  - ⇒ interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
- ⇒ increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission procedures

### AIR QUALITY

**LWVMN Position:** Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

### SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

### LAND USE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### Details

*Support of a state plan that should:*

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).

- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances
- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979 emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN has used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) on determining direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

In 1995 the League closely monitored some legislators attempts to relax Wetlands restrictions. The session ended without changes. In 1996 the LWVMN actively participated with the Wetlands Coalition to monitor the changes to the Wetlands Protection Act. The League wanted to keep the "no-net loss" policy on drainage ditch repair and construction..

**Air:** In 1971 LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976 LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981 LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act; a bill passed in 1990. In 1982 LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulfur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legislation creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982 the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN, in coalition with other environmental groups, made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

In 1977 LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes. During the 1989 session LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste is used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also

supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

From 1990 to 1993 LWVMN continued to support legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS' seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984 when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

In 1997 and again in 1999 LWVMN and other states opposed the transport of nuclear wastes through the heavily populated areas of the state without a clear nuclear waste disposal program from the federal government.

LWVMN opposed the Northern State Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility based on Minnesota Statute Sec. 116C.72, which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975 LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

In 1997 the League lobbied for mandatory state planning which would require the units of government to coordinate their plans with neighboring communities. A softer version of the bill was passed, merely recommending planning and providing assistance to those localities who choose to do it.

**Energy:** In 1977 LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)

- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position: Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

### CHILD SUPPORT

**LWVMN Position: Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.

- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

### CHILD PROTECTION

**LWVMN Position: Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.
- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.
- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

### CHILD HEALTH

**LWVMN Position: Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)**

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

### CHILD CARE

**LWVUS Position: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.**

**LWVMN Position: Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)**

#### Details

*Support of:*

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.
- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position: Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)**

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of pre-natal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

### III. HOUSING

**LWVMN Position: The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.**

#### Details

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low- and moderate- incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

Support revising the tax system to:

- narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;
- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households;
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

### IV. HEALTH CARE

**LWVUS Position: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See 'National Program At a Glance' for full position.)**

### V. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position: Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)**

#### Details

*Support of:*

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.

- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

## VI. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

**LWVUS Position:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**LWVMN Position:** Support for violence prevention programs in our community.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - ⇒ government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes;
  - ⇒ local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula;
  - ⇒ use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
  - ⇒ training for child care providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- the use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence.

- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography.

## VII. ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO USE

**LWVMN Position:** LWVMN supports educational programs that advance improved chemical health

### Details

- Ongoing programs, starting in the elementary school and continuing in the middle and high school.
- Regular, continuing education for adult educators, coaches and school administrators
- Alternatives to suspension for alcohol and tobacco violations in the schools.
- Allocation of public funds for state and community initiatives to prevent illegal alcohol and tobacco use.
- Consistent city and school guidelines for adults who chaperone youth activities.
- State laws, city ordinances and law enforcement efforts designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal alcohol and tobacco use. (Convention 1999)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s LWVMN continued investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977 members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973 LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature.

Since 1975 LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983 the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other anti-discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation. A LWVMN lobbyist served on Governor Carlson's 1994 task force on gays and lesbians, instrumental in passing the Human Rights Amendment.

#### **Merging National and State Positions on Equality of Opportunity:**

The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967 LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief.

The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978 LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983 LWVMN supported pay equity legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law.

During the 1990 session LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

In 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969 LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

**Family Violence:** The league lobbied for legislation incorporated in a 1996 crime prevention bill to fund nurseries and home visits. The visits provide early intervention in abusive situations, recognizing that the number one indicator of criminal behavior is child abuse.

**Child Support:** In 1982 Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

**Child Protection:** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level.

**Child Health:** League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In 1997, the League strongly supported a bill to restrict the sale of tobacco to minors by licensing retailers and setting criteria for display of tobacco products. The legislation was passed and signed into law.

In 1999 LWVMN supported adolescent health clinics.

**Child Care:** In a coalition the League helped to found Child Care WORKS. LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

The League supported a proposal to expand the basic sliding fee program to subsidize low- and middle-income Minnesotans who pay child care expenses. The bill was incorporated into the Omnibus Human Services legislation. The League lobbied for the appropriation of money for crisis nurseries and home visiting programs.

In 1997, the League successfully lobbied for expansion of child care in the welfare reform legislation. One provision of the package was to exempt parents with babies under one year from the immediate work requirements. The parents will receive a portion of the child care subsidy and be allowed to stay at home with their infant.

**Teenage Pregnancy:** In 1988 Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. LWVMN testified in 1994 for the inclusion in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill for money to fund a program to teach male responsibility to teen fathers.

**Housing:** LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate- income people to live near the new entry level jobs opening up in the outer ring suburbs.

In 1997 the League followed with interest legislation to increase affordable rental housing through no-interest mortgages or deferred loans. The program received \$16.4 million for the biennium.

**Health Care:** The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's HealthRight legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions.

LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; and reform now.

The League concentrated its health care lobbying efforts in 1995 to prevent the erosion of the 1994 MinnesotaCare bill and to seek funding for universal coverage, a LWVMN goal to achieve by Jan. 1, 1997.

The League took action on several health care issues in 1997, including a Prescription Drug Fair Competition bill to negotiate lower drug prices for independent pharmacies. The Governor

used a line item veto to eliminate the funding to allow the Department of Administration to negotiate on behalf of the pharmacies. Also, a weakened Patient Protection Act passed and was signed. We had hoped the bill would include an independent appeals process and a strong patient advocacy program., but it certainly is a good beginning.

In 1999 LWVMN wrote to the legislators asking that funds from the tobacco lawsuit be used to establish endowments for the health care of Minnesotans and not be used for tax rebates.

**Mental Health:** The LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to community-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

In 1995 the League provided testimony in support of a bill to create delivery system pilots which would pool the resources of regional treatment centers with community dollars. In 1996 the League lobbied successfully for the continued funding for five Coordinated Employment Projects whose funding would run out on January 1, 1997. The projects provide job counseling for persons with mental illness. In 1997, the League lobbied for the additional employability projects whose funding runs out in 1998.

Bridges, a temporary housing program for persons with mental illness, was expanded in the 1997 after strong lobbying from the League. Other mental health issues that arose during the 1997 session included a cost of living increase for mental health employees, and additional funding for the relocation of Regional Treatment Centers staff into community services.

Legislation to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Civil Commitment Task Force was successful in 1997. Funding was made available for a civil commitment training and resource center.

In 1998 and 1999 LWVMN again lobbied for expansion of the Bridges Program and the Employability Program.

**Prevention of Violence:** In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention

programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates statewide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multifaceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967 and 1976 legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators.

In 1971 and 1973 LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools.

In 1984 and 1985 LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985 LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians. In 1997 a fifth edition is being prepared.

In the 1993 session LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement regarding the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band. Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwe, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement was sent to trial. The federal Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of the band following an appeal by the State of Minnesota of the federal district court's ruling also in the band's favor.

**Alcohol and Tobacco Use:** The 1999 LWVMN Convention adopted by concurrence with the Edina LWV the Alcohol and Tobacco Use position.

## COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.*

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**CMAL Position: Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)**

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

## HOUSING

**CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)**

## HEALTH

**CMAL Position: Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)**

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them.

Since its inception the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975 CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977 CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Housing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982, 1983 and 1993 CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers — the implementers of policy plans adopted by the Council.

In 1997 a bill to elect the Metropolitan Council passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.

## FUNDING/FINANCING

### FISCAL DISPARITIES

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970) The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997) Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

### FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

#### Details

##### CMAL supports:

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - ⇒ uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - ⇒ the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - ⇒ regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - ⇒ regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - ⇒ responsible administrative procedures.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971 CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, “The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area,” reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in

taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, “Fiscal Disparities: An Overview,” appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly. The CMAL reviewed the issue, in 1997 and completed a study, “Re-Study of Fiscal Disparities”.

In 1975 CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council’s Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the solution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

## SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

**CMAL Position:** Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

## HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local “Blueprint for Action.” (1989)

#### Details

##### CMAL supports:

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

## LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment; (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

### Details

#### CMAL supports

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

## ENVIRONMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

**CMAL Position:** Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities.
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans.
- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a

regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority.

- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

## SOLID WASTE

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

**Water Resources:** In 1975 CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Mississippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metropolitan Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines. CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply. Their report, *Water Supply: A Regional Perspective*, was released in January 1995.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985 CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes. Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975 the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified

before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977 CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978 CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979 CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

## TRANSPORTATION

**CMAL Position: Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)**

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969) which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971) which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time. In 1985 CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board (RTB), which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**CMAL Position: Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)**

### Details

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - ⇒ public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - ⇒ systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.
  - ⇒ creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.
  - ⇒ regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
  - ⇒ full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementers, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

In 1973 CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications: CMAL'S Seven Counties in Transition: A Study of the Evolving Role of the County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, Hennepin County. In 1982-83 CMAL supported counties as implementers of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

*June 1999*

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA**

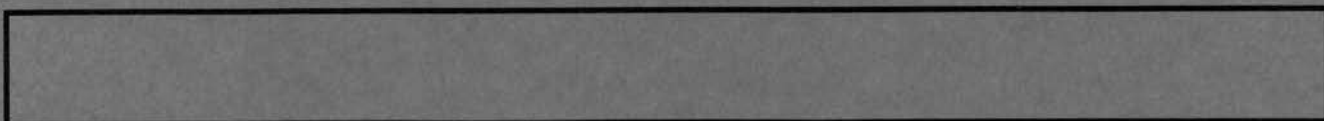
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# **Program for Action 1997-99**

*A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota*

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## INTRODUCTION

To the League of Women Voters, *Program* means those issues chosen by the members for study and action. At each level of the League--national, state or local--Program includes items adopted for current study, and carefully worded, study-based consensus positions which lead to action.

State Program is selected by League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) members in individual units through proposals to their local boards of directors, who send the proposals to the state Board. The state Board then formulates a recommended Program of old, new and/or amended items consisting of those most frequently mentioned. All items, whether recommended or not, may be discussed, amended and adopted or rejected at the biennial state Convention.

Following adoption of the Program, research committees are formed to prepare study information on new items. In small units and at large meetings, members weigh the pros and cons of issues to reach consensus on each study item. The state Board receives the consensus reports from the local Leagues, determines areas of agreement, and formulates position statements. Only after consensus is reached and a position is formed can League take action. The state Board also evaluates specific legislation and decides what action should be taken. There are two kinds of action: 1) developing public support for League positions; 2) supporting specific measures and policies which promote a League position or opposing those which threaten it. The process works similarly for the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), except that the Program items have regional significance and are chosen and studied by members in the metropolitan area.

Leagues at all levels may "concur" with a position of another League either within Minnesota or in another state. A possible concurrence study is considered at state Convention in the same manner as any other Program item. Study materials developed for the original study may be used and are supplemented by the committee overseeing the concurrence study. The LWVMN position on Prevention of Violence, for example, was originally adopted by the LWV-Minneapolis and concurred with by Leagues throughout the state.

Included in this booklet are summaries of the 1995-97 Programs of the LWVMN, of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the CMAL, which consists of the local Leagues in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. For each LWVMN Program item on which a position has been reached, you will find:

- a summary of the position, along with a brief statement of the relevant LWVUS position, if there is one (all in boldface);
- details of the LWVMN position, including the date when consensus was reached on each section; and
- a history of League and governmental action on the topic.

LWVMN positions have been grouped according to LWVUS classifications: Social Policy, Natural Resources and Government. Exceptions to these groups are Education and Criminal Justice, which LWVMN retains as separate categories. To emphasize the fact that the state League often acts on national positions, summary statements of LWVUS positions have been included where appropriate. For more complete information on the Program of the League of Women Voters of the United States, the reader should see *Impact on Issues*, 1996-98 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).

League members throughout the state promote public support for positions by talking with legislators and community leaders; attending precinct caucuses and participating in the political process; and using the media, public meetings and personal contacts to tell their story. Local Leagues may take action themselves if the action is consistent with national, state and/or CMAL positions; their membership is informed and in general agreement; and, when the action affects other Leagues, they confer prior to taking action.

The state Board takes official action in the name of the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. This action may consist of writing letters, personal lobbying of members of the Legislature or executive agencies, testimony at legislative hearings, holding press conferences, or any other measure deemed useful by the Board. Individual Leaguers speak for themselves only and not as League members unless directed to do so by state, national or local League boards.

The League of Women Voters strongly endorses citizen involvement in the political process. It encourages League members to participate in the political party of their choice. The League itself is nonpartisan; LWV, as an organization, does not support candidates or political parties. State Board members are restricted to low-level partisan political activities and may not run for party-designated public office.

## LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWVUS and LWVMN Programs, League Principles may be the basis for state and local League actions. The Principles have served two functions according to LWVUS Bylaws: 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program, and 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels. Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate League board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

League Principles are as follows:

- 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 which 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; 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 effect 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.

## PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

### Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of Minnesota

#### I. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Judiciary:** Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.

**Corrections:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

#### II. EDUCATION

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance and insure adequate financing of public schools.

**Financing of Education:** Support of equal access to a good public education for all Minnesota children.. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

**Collective Bargaining and Tenure:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

**Library Funding:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

#### III. GOVERNMENT

**Citizen Rights:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections. Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

**Organization of Government:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and Executive Branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment based substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments;

opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

**Financing State Government:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on broad-based taxes and user fees. Support of an evaluation of all individual revenue sources to determine if it is competitive with other states, efficient, equitable, progressive, reliable, responsive and simple. Support of a broad-based sales tax with exemptions for essential items. Support of an equitable property tax as the primary source of financing services provided by local governments and a partial funding for education. Support of a corporation franchise tax competitive with other states. Support of achieving social goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. Support of the principle that state legislation mandating local government action should identify sources of revenue. Support of long-term financial management, budget projections and budget reserve.

**State Government Spending:** Belief that a long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions. Support of the following broad goals, in order of priority: provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities; provide basic level of health and human services; protect natural resources; encourage economic self-sufficiency; provide for public safety; provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities; and preserve open spaces. Support of the use of specific criteria when faced with the need to limit spending, i.e. curtailing subsidies for sports teams and convention centers, maintenance of existing infrastructure over increased infrastructure, tax relief targeted to low-income households and providing services first to the most needy.

**Firearms:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. Opposition to an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution granting an individual right to bear arms. Support for the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

#### IV. NATURAL RESOURCES

**Water Resources:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs.

**Solid Waste:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

**Land Use:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local levels, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

#### V. SOCIAL POLICY

**Equal Opportunity:** Support of policies to insure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens

##### FAMILY ISSUES

**Family Violence:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence; support for improved services for the victims.

**Child Support:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

**Child Protection:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services.

**Child Health:** Support access to comprehensive prenatal and child health care.

**Child Care:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state.

**Teen Pregnancy:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.

**Housing:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing. Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Support of incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of disincentives to local units of government that do not promote a mix of housing opportunities. Support of revision of the tax system to narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner-occupied residential property; reduction of the tax rate on rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households; encouragement of maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households.

**Mental Health:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community-based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services.

**Violence Prevention:** Support for violence prevention programs in Minnesota.

### **Program Adopted by League of Women Voters of the United States**

#### **I. GOVERNMENT**

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agricultural policy; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.**

##### **Agricultural Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

##### **Citizen Rights**

**Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

##### **Individual Liberties**

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

##### **Public Policy on Reproductive Choices**

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

##### **Congress and the Presidency**

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

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

#### **DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation**

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

##### **Election Process**

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

**Campaign Finance:** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

**Election of the President:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

##### **Fiscal Policy**

Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

##### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

##### **Voting Rights**

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

#### **II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.**

##### **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

##### **Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

### **Trade**

Support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

### **United Nations**

Support measures to strengthen the United Nations, in recognition of the need for cooperation among nations in an interdependent world.

### **U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## **III. NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.**

### **Resource Management**

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

### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**

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

### **Public Participation**

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

## **IV. SOCIAL POLICY**

**Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, achieve universal health care coverage at reasonable cost, promote the well being of children, and combat discrimination, poverty and violence.**

### **Child Care**

Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

### **Early Intervention for Children at Risk**

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

### **Equality of Opportunity**

Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

### **Health Care**

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.

### **Meeting Basic Human Needs**

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

### **Urban Policy**

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

### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs and performance must meet these criteria:**

- competent personnel with clear responsibilities;
- coordination among agencies and levels of government;
- adequate financing;
- effective enforcement;
- well defined channels for citizen input and review.

*For more complete information on the Program of LWVUS, see Impact on Issues, 1996-98 (Publication No. 386, LWVUS, 1730 M St. NW, Washington DC 20036, \$5.00 plus postage and handling).*

## **1996-98 ISSUE FOR EMPHASIS**

- **Making Democracy Work**

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## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

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### **JUDICIARY**

**LWVMN Position: Support of a judicial system with the capacity to assure a speedy trial and equal justice for all.**

#### **Details**

#### *Support of:*

- administrative reforms that expedite justice: establishment of a unified court system, an intermediate appellate court, and procedures to strengthen and streamline judicial administration; additional staff for prosecution, public defenders and legal services when such needs are established; statewide guidelines on bail-fixing process; standardization of forms and procedures; use of technology in administration; use of juries in civil cases only by request.

- methods to improve judicial quality: a nonpartisan selection with a commission to propose names for all appointments to the bench; mandatory training for all judges; adequate salary increases for judges and related revision of retirement benefits.
- procedural reforms that ensure individual rights and access to due process of law: reform of bail process to recognize methods other than monetary to ensure appearance of accused at trial; strict guarantees to ensure protection of the defendant and society in the use of plea bargaining; sentencing alternatives; methods to reduce disparity in sentencing; no-fault divorce procedure using irremediable differences as grounds for dissolution; guarantees to witnesses in grand jury proceedings re: counsel in proceedings, availability of information to defense counsel and restrictions on waiving immunity in later trials; retention of age 18 for persons under jurisdiction of juvenile court; mandatory first appearance in juvenile court for all persons under jurisdiction of such court; requirement for formal transcript of commitment hearings with a rule or regulation protecting privacy of such records.
- the development of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judicial system: alternatives for sentencing; alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes." (1973)

## CORRECTIONS

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a correctional system responsive to the needs of the individual offender and of society. Support of sentencing decisions based on circumstances in relation to the crime, the offender and the effect on public safety, made by the judge within legislative guidelines.

### Adult Corrections Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- correctional options which will protect society from the offender.
- provision for a continuum of correctional options available according to the needs of the individual offender. The continuum should range from maximum security to facilities and services in the community.
- treatment and rehabilitative programs for all offenders. Among the programs should be those of mental health, education, job preparation, employment assistance and counseling. There should be appropriate incentives to encourage offender participation in programs.
- recognition of the offender as an individual with basic human rights commensurate with constitutional rights except as necessary for the protection of offenders and

society. These rights include, but are not limited to, healthful conditions and due process.

- ongoing programs of evaluation and research as an aid in setting program priorities. Included within the scope of the program are need identification, data collection and retrievability, and the use of scientific methods in designing the evaluation plan.
- education programs aimed at increasing citizen knowledge and awareness of all facets of corrections.
- up-to-date personnel procedures including, but not limited to, training, compensations plans, grievance procedures. (1975)

### Juvenile Justice Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- a program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota.
- continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies.
- the availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents.
- maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization.
- diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels.
- the consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles.
- constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families. (1975)

### Sentencing Position Details

#### *Support of:*

- a presumptive sentencing model, but not indeterminate sentencing, the presumptive sentencing model to be fixed by administrative or judicial staff.
- consideration of mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances.
- the use of diversion and contracts between offenders and authorities.

- sentencing based on both the seriousness of the crime and the needs of the offender.
- sentencing taking into consideration:
  - ⇒ the need for drug counseling;
  - ⇒ whether the offender has a marketable skill;
  - ⇒ academic training of the offender;
  - ⇒ need for psychiatric treatment;
  - ⇒ restitution when appropriate;
  - ⇒ the availability of a residence and/or employment;
  - ⇒ resolution of the causative situation.

No consensus was reached on plea bargaining, sentence length, time off for good behavior, or determinate or legislatively-fixed models. (1976)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Judiciary:** In 1971-72 Local Leagues observed the various levels of the Minnesota court system and studied their constitutional and statutory requirements. Consensus was reached in March 1973. In 1982 the Legislature passed a proposed constitutional amendment for a new state court of appeals. League lobbied successfully for the passage of this amendment, and enabling legislation was passed in 1983. League action continues to emphasize court unification, alternatives for handling behavior now defined as "status offenses" and "social (or victimless) crimes," guarantees of protection to witnesses in grand jury proceedings, and support of community alternatives as an adjunct to the judiciary system.

The League adopted at the 1997 convention a study of the election of judges in Minnesota. The goal of the study is to examine the present system and look at alternative proposals for appointing judges. The study will educate League members in how the system now functions and how it might be improved.

**Corrections:** In 1973-74 League examined correctional institutions, programs and personnel on the local, county and state levels. The adult corrections consensus and concurrence with the consensus of the LWV of Minneapolis on juvenile corrections were reached in the spring of 1975. After the 1981 state Convention passed a call to action urging immediate funding for a new Minnesota Correctional Institution for Women, League lobbied in support of it during the 1983 legislative session, and a bonding bill was passed providing for funding of a new facility.

LWVMN members have lobbied in favor of uniform standards and equal treatment of prisoners in all county jails. They have also lobbied for support of the mutual agreement program, a greater use of community corrections, frequent and regular evaluations, drug education programs, consideration of physical or psychological disorders when specifying treatment or work expectations, the concept of inmate rights, preventive programs for juveniles and corrective training.

**Sentencing:** Aware that sentencing was likely to be an issue in the 1977 Legislature, the LWVMN Corrections Committee asked for a mini-study and consensus on sentencing in fall 1976. Members supported presumptive sentencing, under which the Legislature would set minimum and maximum outer limits and a "presumed" sentence somewhere in between. The judge could vary the sentence within the limits, based on mitigating or aggravating circumstances defined by the Legislature.

Committee members monitored the progress of bills on determinate sentencing during the 1976-77 legislative session, while the Legislature continued to study the matter before recommending changes in Minnesota's indeterminate system. The 1978 Legislature passed a "guideline" determinate sentencing law which calls for a specified sentence based on the crime, allowing a 15% variance. The law created a ten-member commission appointed by the Governor to set the guidelines which became effective in July 1980. The League testified in favor of those portions of this law consistent with our position and did not support or oppose the rest of the provisions.

#### EDUCATION

(See Social Policy section for additional positions.)

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVMN Position:** Support of increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance.

##### Details

- Support of correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards. (1967)

#### FINANCING OF EDUCATION

**LWVMN Position:** All Minnesota children should have equal access to a good public education. State funding for education should be at a level that makes programs of comparable substance and quality available to all. A student's access to a good education should not depend on the wealth of his or her school district.

##### Details

*Support of:*

- the concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
  - ⇒ provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983); until the State of Minnesota can ensure consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state, the LWVMN supports the continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes; (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education for various handicapping conditions, gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP); (1991)
  - ⇒ state funding of the following cost differences between school districts: scarcity, training and

- experience, desegregation and transportation; (1991)
- ⇒ using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding; (1983)
- ⇒ encouragement of financial efficiencies; (1983)
- ⇒ requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies. Such expenditures must be approved by the state Department of Education; (1991)
- ⇒ allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability; (1983)
- ⇒ reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments; (1983)
- ⇒ the gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue; (1991)
- ⇒ maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many. (1983)

*Opposition to:*

- continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction; (1983)
- state funding of cost of living differences between districts. (1991)

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND TENURE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in the collective bargaining and tenure laws of the state as they apply to K-12 teachers only.

### Details

*Support of:*

- collective bargaining for teachers, with changes in Minnesota's collective bargaining law to:
  - ⇒ require that teacher bargaining agents and school boards publish first offers and all subsequent written offers during the negotiations.
  - ⇒ require that arbitrators hearing teacher contracts know school law and procedures.
  - ⇒ allow a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions that are closed to the public.
- the present bargaining law provision that allows parties to negotiations in each district to determine for themselves which items they consider negotiable. If necessary, the district court would make the final decision.
- the school board as the representative of the public in the negotiation process. Neither parent-community advisory committees nor representatives on the negotiation team should be required by the state.

- Tenure/Continuing Contract laws for teachers, with changes in the current state law to:
  - ⇒ require periodic review and evaluation of tenured teachers' performance, leading to remedial help when indicated.
  - ⇒ retain teacher probationary periods, but lengthen the probation period of Continuing Contract teachers. (Continuing Contract does not apply to first class cities.)
  - ⇒ require school boards to consider factors in addition to order of employment when they must make staff dismissals due to reduction of positions. Such factors include recent teaching experience in the field of certification, program needs of the district, and special expertise of the individual faculty member.
- retention of state laws defining fair dismissal procedures. (1978)

LWVMN does not support extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes *mandatory* negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

## LIBRARY FUNDING

**LWVMN Position:** Support for increased and restructured funding for public libraries.

### Details

*Support of:*

- increased funding of Minnesota public libraries by means of a combination of substantial local funding, an increase in state funding, and a moderate increase in special-purpose federal funding. LWVMN considers the 1978 funding proportions--85% local government, 6% other local funds, 6% state, 3% federal--to be inequitable in that funding depends predominantly on the local property tax.
- substantial local funding (more than the 30% proposed by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) but less than the current 91%), in the belief that local control ensures sensitivity to local needs.
- an increased level and greater proportion of state funding for public libraries (but not to the 50% proposed by NCLIS), believing that public libraries, like public schools, share significantly in the education of the state's citizens.
- an increased level and moderately increased proportion of federal funding for public libraries (but less than the 20% proposed by NCLIS).
- distribution of state and federal funds to Minnesota public library systems according to a formula based largely on population, but also taking into account

square miles of area served and the inverse of assessed adjusted valuation, so as to achieve the most equitable and satisfactory distribution of funds.

- four goals of the Minnesota Long Range Plan for Library Service, ranked as follows: (1) making services accessible to all citizens; (2) fostering a system of shared resources; (3) developing multi-county regional systems; (4) establishing libraries in areas without them.
- the sharing of resources; using trained and supervised volunteers; and charging fees for time-consuming research and special materials, programs, equipment and services.

LWVMN opposes cutting services and/or hours. (1979)

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Equal Opportunity:** In 1966, in conjunction with the national study of Human Resources, LWVMN examined equality of opportunity in education in Minnesota. LWVMN supported the consolidation of the state's 850 common school districts (those not having a high school), the State Board of Education's efforts to achieve racial balance, and increased transportation aid to achieve that goal.

In 1980 LWVMN published What's the Score in Minnesota, a project to monitor equality of opportunity for women in athletics in public schools. In 1995 and 1996 LWVMN joined several other organizations in a letter to the Legislature opposing making danceline an interscholastic sport.

LWVMN supported the 1985 legislation which introduced student/parent enrollment choice for 11th and 12th graders, based on the League's support of equal access to education and increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities. In 1988 we supported expansion of the program statewide and to all students providing there were safeguards to assure compliance with desegregation plans.

In 1993 LWVMN lobbied in support of maintaining measurable standards to determine racial imbalance. LWVMN opposed the wholesale repeal of many education rules and mandates which was proposed during the 1993 session. We urged an interim review to assure that no loss of equality of opportunity resulted. We continued to support human relations training for school staff and programs for health and violence prevention. Legislative rules that we advocated retaining included gender equity in sports and the Inclusive Educational Program Rule which requires each school district to create a plan for multicultural, gender-fair, disability-sensitive curriculum. The League was instrumental in developing the latter rule.

**Finance:** During the 1971 legislative session, many League positions supported the education finance statute: the shift from local property tax to increased state aid for support of local operating costs; change to use of average daily membership for computing state aids; increased AFDC pupil payments in districts with relatively high proportions of these children; expansion of handicapped aids to include trainable mentally retarded children. Later, a graduated scale of payments as numbers of AFDC students rose, increased support of the cost of educating handicapped students (including the learning disabled), and the

formation of the Council on Quality Education were enacted with LWVMN support.

The 1976 consensus enabled LWVMN support of legislation which helped offset the cost of enrollment fluctuation. In 1979, LWVMN, working with a broad-based coalition, lobbied successfully for state aids for gifted and talented students.

Since the 1983 consensus on financing education, LWVMN has closely monitored changes in the school finance formula. We supported the creation of the "training and experience index" as a way of recognizing the cost of mature and highly trained staff. In 1989, we supported expanding the index to apply to all districts.

In 1987, the legislature combined many formerly categorical aids into a "general revenue formula." LWVMN expressed concern that attention to programs such as gifted and talented (which were folded into a "categorical reserve" to be used for one or all of the formerly categorical programs) would be lost without dedicated funds. We have urged local Leagues to monitor the impact of the new formula on local programs.

LWVMN opposed a limited demonstration voucher plan which could be used for private or independent schools because of our concern that use of public money for private K-12 education erodes the financial support of public education. In 1996 the LWVMN actively opposed school vouchers for K-12 education; the League believes the focus of state resources should be on continuing to improve the system that serves all children.

During the 1989 session LWVMN supported the Alliance for Commitment to Education in their proposal for school funding. We opposed shifting more of the burden for the cost of special education onto the local districts as proposed in the Governor's budget. During the Special Session called in September 1989 to consider property tax reform, LWVMN supported the increased state responsibility for school funding as a way to assure less reliance on local property wealth for school programs.

Financing education was restudied in 1991 and the consensus updated. During the 1991 session the LWVMN's goal was to support funding at an adequate level. We also supported supplemental funding to correct racial imbalance. We opposed funding alternative education in non-sectarian schools. In 1992 we supported the American Indian post-secondary grants and the school breakfast program.

The League lobbied in 1997 in support of legislation to expand programs for reading readiness. The bill required early reading instruction to be a mandatory part of curriculum for teacher candidates and provided challenge grants to schools for early intervention reading instruction. The legislation was rolled into the Omnibus Education Finance bill.

The 1997 bill was vetoed by the Governor because it did not include his requested increase in tax deductions and tax credit for education expenses. The League contacted the Governor urging him to sign the bill. A special session convened in June 1997 passed a bill including tax credits and doubling deductions for private school tuition.

**Library Funding:** In 1985 LWVMN supported increased funding for public libraries in Minnesota and supported the four goals of the Minnesota Long range Plan for library services.

## GOVERNMENT

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.*

### I. CITIZEN RIGHTS

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate participation in government decision making. (1974, 1976)

### PUBLIC POLICY ON REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

**LWVUS Position:** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. (1983)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Citizen Rights:** In 1995 the LWVMN was a member of the Information Access Policy Discussion group which sponsored legislation to make it easier to access information via the rapidly emerging cable and phone line technology.

In 1996 LWVMN was very involved in a debate to continue the dual-track airport planning process so that citizen groups could provide input to the decision process. Legislation to abort the process was successful, despite League efforts.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choice:** LWVMN has worked in coalitions to monitor state developments on reproductive choice. Following the July 1989 U. S. Supreme Court decision on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, LWVMN participated in a news conference expressing concerns about the effect of restrictions on abortion services and the resulting patchwork of public policy as states enact dissimilar policies. In the fall of 1989 LWVMN became a member of the MN Alliance for Choice, encouraging local League members to help with a Choice Attitude Survey conducted by Planned Parenthood of Minnesota.

During the 1990 legislative session LWVMN focused on opposing legislation which would have made abortions illegal in Minnesota. During the 1991 session, League worked with the Alliance for Choice to emphasize preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the abortion rate in Minnesota as set forth in the Minnesota Women's Consortium's Prevention. Not Prohibition campaign. This campaign was rated as an effective advocacy and educational tool.

The 1992 session offered the opportunity to lobby for the Family Planning Special Services Grant which increased funding to low-income people for abortions.

During the 1993 session LWVMN worked to pass the health clinic access bill assuring the right of unimpeded approach and departure from abortion clinics. In 1994 League's efforts were

focused on ensuring that abortion and other reproductive services were included in the health care reform bill and opposing legislation intended to place restrictions on the right to abortion.

In 1995 the League was involved in deleting an amendment called the Woman's Right to Know from the Welfare Reform Bill. During the 1996 session the LWVMN closely tracked over 35 anti-choice bills waiting to attach as amendments to other legislation.

## ELECTION LAWS

**LWVUS Position:** Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and abolish the electoral college; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. (1970, 1976)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting and school district elections.

### Details

#### Support of:

- centralized responsibility in the state government for achieving uniform election procedures and for training election officials. (1961)
- extension of mandatory voter registration prior to election day to cover more voters through inclusion of more municipalities through county-wide registration, or through state-wide registration. (1961)
- extension of election laws to cover school district elections, including uniform, mandatory voter registration. (1972)
- rotation of names of candidates for the same office on ballots. (1972)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Election Laws:** LWVMN began studying election laws in 1957. LWVMN supported a bill passed by the 1977 Legislature which provides for the mandatory training of election judges.

In 1973 an Omnibus Registration Bill passed with LWVMN support. This bill centralized responsibility for registration rules and regulations with the Secretary of State, established state-wide registration procedures, required counties to maintain permanent registration lists, and permitted postcard and election day registration. The League supported legislation in 1983 to facilitate absentee voting by requiring the county auditor's office to be open on the Saturday afternoon and Monday evening prior to a primary or general election.

In 1995 the League was asked to provide testimony on elections to the Election Division of the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee. The League testified on what is right and wrong with the current election process and the general position on elections and the campaign process. The Growe Commission, an 18-member bipartisan commission of

which LWVMN President, Kay Erickson, was a member, published its report on Electoral Reform.

During the 1995 session the League testified in support of appropriating money to produce and mail 3 voter guides: to the caucus, to the primary and to the general election. The League assured the legislators that such guides can be produced in a non-partisan way, in a manner similar to our production of voter guides, and offered to produce the guides. Unfortunately, funding was not forthcoming.

In 1996 the LWVMN supported an unsuccessful attempt to authorize mail ballots in special elections for the increased accessibility to the voting process it provides in elections with traditionally low voter turnout.

**School District Election Laws:** League members reached consensus in 1972 and lobbied for a bill which passed in 1973, simplifying absentee balloting, requiring rotation of candidates' names on non-partisan ballots, and forbidding election day campaigning or solicitation of votes within 100 feet of a polling place.

**Presidential Primary:** In 1991 the League supported adding a presidential primary in addition to caucuses and supported a bill to clarify issues of candidate withdrawal to help elections be more "voter friendly." A primary was held in 1992, with League support and involvement at the polls. However, due to an insufficient voter turnout a primary was not held in 1996.

**Term Limits:** LWVUS Convention 1992 adopted a motion "to amend the Government position of the LWVUS national program to allow state and local Leagues to use national positions and principles to take action against term limits for state or local officeholders." At the January 1993 Board meeting, LWVMN voted to oppose term limits for the legislative branch of Minnesota state government. LWVMN in 1994 established an "opposition to legislative term limits fund" and worked in coalition with such organizations as Common Cause, AFL-CIO, League of Minnesota Cities and MEA to successfully oppose the placement of a term limits measure on the ballot.

In 1995 the League voiced its strong opposition to both national and state efforts to adopt term limits legislation. As an alternative to term limits, the League supported successful legislation to rotate committee chairs. Limiting the number of years a member can be chair allows new ideas.

**Handicapped Access to Precinct Caucuses and Conventions:** During the 1989 Legislative session LWVMN worked with other groups to enact a measure which requires handicapped access to party conventions and requires that convention and caucus materials be available to the visually impaired.

**Permanent Absentee Voter Status:** During the 1990 session LWVMN supported the enactment of a bill providing for permanent absentee voter status for eligible voters who are permanently unable to go to the polling place on election day due to illness or disability.

## CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

**LWVUS Position:** Action to 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. (1973)**

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improvements in election laws regulating campaign practices.

### Details

#### Support of:

- the public's right to comprehensive disclosure of all political campaign contributions and expenditures: mandatory, timely, uniform and complete reports of campaign contributions and expenditures should be made to a central authority responsible for disseminating such information to the public; responsibility for reporting contributions to the candidate's campaign and for reporting expenditures by the candidate and those made on the candidate's behalf rests squarely on the candidate; penalties should be stringent enough to ensure compliance by candidates. (1961)
- judicious use of public resources to finance campaigns. (1972)
- reduction of the amount of money spent on campaigns. (1972)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

LWVMN has been active on this subject since 1961. In 1973 we worked in coalition for major campaign financing legislation which established the State Ethics Commission. LWVMN monitors this body, now called the Ethical Practices Board (EPB), and continues to review legislation affecting the EPB. In 1980, League supported and Minnesota voters passed a constitutional amendment raising campaign spending limits for candidates for executive and legislative offices and mandating public disclosure of campaign spending for all state candidates.

Beginning in 1983 the Legislature has considered bills designed to set campaign spending limits for congressional candidates who agree to accept public financing. During the 1990 session LWVMN supported passage of the bill establishing voluntary spending limits for candidates of the U. S. House of Representatives (\$425,000) and the Senate (\$3,400,000). A candidate who agrees to abide by the limits, but whose opponent does not, receives a "financial incentive" or subsidy of up to 25% of the limit and would not have to abide by the limit. Candidates must provide an equal match to the amount of subsidy received. If both candidates agree to abide by the limits, neither receives a subsidy. The subsidy is funded from the state's general fund. The statute urges Congress to enact additional regulations to limit contributions to candidates by political action committees.

LWVMN has supported efforts to limit fundraising events for legislators during sessions each year since 1985. The 1990 Legislature enacted a bill prohibiting principal campaign committees and "friends of" committees from holding fund-raisers during a regular legislative session.

During the 1995 session LWVMN lobbied hard to keep the current ethics law, and in the end was successful. There were several attempts to weaken the laws passed the previous year. In

particular an attempt to create a loophole was monitored by League lobbyists.

The League continues to work to make the federal election process more open and equitable. Recent national action has focused on support for legislation mandating public financing for congressional elections and placing limits on the size of donations that political action committees can give to candidates. Leagues continue to apply the position in working for campaign reform measures at the state and local levels.

In 1993 LWVMN supported action by the legislature to improve campaign finance laws in Minnesota. Working with a coalition formed by Common Cause, a reform measure passed which decreased financing from political action committees, lobbyists and large donors for candidates for state office and encouraged increased participation by small donors and the general public. The measure also eliminated abuses of the system by prohibiting "friends of" committees, the transfer of funds between candidates, disallowed public subsidy for unopposed candidates and prohibited caucus fund-raisers during legislative session. Recognizing the incumbent advantage, first-time candidates for state office are permitted to increase their spending limit by 10%. For the first time contribution limits were placed on candidates for local office.

To provide funding for these changes, more emphasis was placed on public financing for state-office candidates. The check-off

system remains with an additional state appropriation. Small contributors may receive a one-time reimbursement from the state for a contribution to a candidate running for state office.

In 1996, in conjunction with Common Cause, local leagues lobbied US representatives in support of HR 2566, a comprehensive campaign finance reform bill in the House of Representatives: voluntary spending limits; reduced cost ways for candidates to communicate with the public; controls on "soft-money" contributions; limits on large individual contributions; and cuts in the amount of PAC donations.

The League issued a statement in 1997 regarding our position on campaign finance reform measures considered in Congress.

LWVMNEF moderated a town meeting on campaign finance (attended by Senator Wellstone, Representatives Gutknecht, Ramstad, Luther and Vento), where the League was able to present our position directly to some of our elected officials.

At the state level, LWVMN lobbied against the relaxation of a gift ban included in campaign reform legislation passed in 1994. We urged legislators to avoid the perception of undue influence at a time when the public is asking for continued reform.

## OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

**LWVUS Position:** Governmental bodies (should) protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974)

LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials, since it impedes the public's right to know.

## HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Open Meetings:** Support for open meetings was first made explicit in the LWVUS 1972 U. S. Congress position; in 1973, Leagues were empowered to apply that position at the state and local levels. The 1974 Minnesota Open Meeting Law required all meetings of governmental bodies to be open to the public (except those of the Board of Pardons; the Corrections Board; and the Legislature, which sets its own rules) and that these bodies maintain records on their actions that are accessible to the public.

LWVMN testified for this law, and members continue to monitor compliance at state and local levels of government. LWVMN opposes any changes in the law, except it would support a limited number of school board bargaining strategy sessions closed to the public. The law continues to be subject to reinterpretation and application. The Minnesota Supreme Court in 1983 ruled that private discussions by school board members prior to a meeting where a vote was to be taken were not in violation of the law, since those gatherings were conducted with less than a quorum present.

The 1983 Legislature passed an LWVMN-supported bill that requires pertinent materials on subjects discussed at an open meeting be made available to the public.

The 1990 legislature passed a bill which applies the requirements of the open meeting law to the Legislature. (Caucuses of members from the same party are excluded.)

**Open Records:** Ever since the 1974 Minnesota Legislature enacted the Data Privacy Act, LWVMN has monitored the action of the Legislature in the area of open records, balancing our desire for openness with the individual's right to privacy. In 1979, the Legislature passed a LWVMN-supported bill which defined the terms "public," "private," and "confidential," and stated that all government data will be open to the public unless specifically classified as confidential or private by state statute. LWVMN continues to monitor all bills dealing with the Data Privacy Act. The League has resisted attempts to facilitate the classification of materials since it impedes the public's right to know.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

**LWVUS Position:** Action to support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. (1972) Action to promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution. (1976) Action to support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population. (1966, 1972)

**LWVMN Position:** Support of improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support of apportionment substantially on population of congressional districts and of all elected state and local governmental bodies.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess. (1955, 1968)
- a post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature. (1955)
- changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature. (1970)
- measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification. (1947, 1962)
- regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
  - ⇒ compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group.
  - ⇒ public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action.
  - ⇒ prompt judicial review. (1979)

### III. INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

**LWVMN Position:** Support of the continuation of legislative initiative and compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendment; opposition to most forms of voter initiative and referendum on statutes; opposition to recall by voters of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; support of strict procedural limits on any process of initiative, referendum or recall.

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory).
- the continuation of compulsory voter referendum on constitutional amendments.
- strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on:
  - ⇒ time span for collecting signatures;
  - ⇒ eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions;
  - ⇒ percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures;
  - ⇒ size of vote required for passage;
  - ⇒ procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum;
  - ⇒ contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns. (1980)

##### *Opposition to:*

- direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes.
- optional and compulsory referendum on statutes; no agreement on petition referendum on statutes.
- voter recall of members of the Legislature and state constitutional officers; no agreement on voter recall of judges or appointed officials.

#### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Legislative Reform:** Organization of State Government was adopted for study in 1967 with an overall look at the Minnesota Legislature and the executive branch. Consensus positions reached in 1968 and 1970 incorporated earlier LWVMN positions on support for annual flexible sessions, legislative post-audit, reapportionment, and changing the amending process; some of these positions date from League's 1947 study of the State Constitution. Minnesota now has a two-year flexible session. The legislative process has become more open to the public, more research assistants have been hired, and information about the Legislature and copies of bills are easier to obtain. Organization of committees continues to improve, although reducing the number of committees has substantially increased the number of subcommittees. The 1975 Legislature voted to provide lodging expenses in addition to per diem and also to allow travel expenses within a legislator's district.

**Amending the Constitution:** The 1947 LWV State Constitution study showed the need for changing the amending process. Ratification of a constitutional amendment requires a majority vote of all those voting in the election. Thus a voter who fails to vote on the amendment automatically casts a "no" vote. LWVMN believes that the requirement for ratification should be changed to a majority of those voting on the question. In 1974 LWVMN supported a constitutional amendment allowing amendments to be

passed by a 55% majority of those voting on the question; the amendment was defeated by the voters.

**Reapportionment:** LWVUS has supported reapportionment based on population since 1966. The 1979 LWVMN Convention revised the state position to make it responsive to the issue of reapportionment in the 1980s. In 1980, League supported a constitutional amendment establishing a bipartisan commission to draw new legislative and congressional districts. The amendment failed.

During the 1991 session, LWVMN worked with a coalition to support timely redistricting of the state legislature. As in previous redistricting efforts the legislative process was contentious and the resulting plan controversial, thus reinforcing the need for a bipartisan redistricting commission.

**Initiative, Referendum and Recall:** LWVMN opposed a constitutional amendment proposed in the 1980 general election that would have provided for initiative and referendum. The League joined a coalition, Citizens for Representative Government, and formed a ballot issues fund to finance the opposition campaign. The amendment was defeated since it did not receive a majority of the votes cast in the election even though pre-election polls indicated it was supported by 75 to 80% of the electorate.

The League Action Committee and the State Board reiterated its 1979 position against recall. A bill, including enabling legislation, passed during the 1996 session, to place on the November ballot a question to include recall as part of the constitution.

#### IV. FINANCING STATE GOVERNMENT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a balanced and diversified revenue system that is equitable, competitive with other states, progressive and reliable. Support of long-term financial management, projections and a budget reserve. (1995)

##### *Support of:*

- a balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees.
- the following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
  - ⇒ **Competitiveness:** Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness.
  - ⇒ **Efficiency:** Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated.
  - ⇒ **Equity:** Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances.

⇒ **Progressivity:** Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes.

⇒ **Reliability:** Provides a stable source of revenue.

⇒ **Responsiveness:** Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth.

⇒ **Simplicity:** Is understandable to the taxpayer.

- a progressive **individual income tax** with a graduated rate schedule.
- a broad-based **retail sales tax** with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons.
- the use of an equitable **property tax** as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education. (See the Financing Education position.)
- a **corporation franchise tax** which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. The LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state.
- the use of **other sources of revenue**, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system.
- achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
  1. Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system;
  2. Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving the intended purpose;
  3. Reviewed periodically to justify continuance.
- the distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
  - ⇒ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
  - ⇒ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
  - ⇒ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
  - ⇒ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance that equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.

⇒ Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.

- the principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources.
- long-term financial management of all state government funds.
- long-term projections of revenue and expenditures should be considered when making budget decisions.
- an adequate budget reserve should be established during good economic times to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services.

#### **HISTORY OF STATE ACTION**

Since the mid '50s the LWVMN has studied the financing of state and local governments. Early studies focused on the property tax, resulting in LWVMN support of property tax reform. In 1969 LWVMN lobbied successfully for legislation permitting counties to establish county assessor systems; all assessors must be professionally accredited. In keeping with its education position, LWVMN supported a shift in 1971 away from property tax and toward greater state funding of education. LWVMN again studied financing state government in 1975-77 and adopted an expanded position. In 1979 this position and the existence of a state surplus enabled LWVMN to lobby for decreased taxation and to support reducing individual income tax rates by changing the tax brackets. The 1979 Legislature passed a comprehensive tax relief law which included adjusting income tax rates by indexing income tax brackets for inflation.

The early 1980s saw great problems arise with financing state government. The economy lagged, with high unemployment and low revenue collections. In response to the economic situation and attempts to alleviate it, in 1983 the governor appointed a tax commission to analyze Minnesota's overall economic situation and the tax structure. The commission, whose findings League monitored, made comprehensive recommendations for the economy of the 1980s.

In the October 1989 Special Session, the Legislature enacted a property tax reform bill which began to restructure state-local finances. The goal is for the state to fund state-mandated programs and for property tax to support local programs. For example, starting in 1991, the state funded income maintenance programs formerly paid for by state and local money. In 1990 the state also assumed district court administration and certain other court costs. Other features of the bill were changes in property tax rates, a decrease in the number of rates, and more detailed property tax statements. LWVMN supported the bill's effort to break the link between local property tax and state mandated services.

### **V. GOVERNMENT SPENDING**

#### **I. Broad Goals**

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns

should guide state spending decisions. The League strongly supports the following broad goals: (by priority)

1. Provide high-quality K-12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans;
2. Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans;
3. Protect the state's natural environment;
4. Encourage economic self-sufficiency;
5. Provide for the public safety;
6. Provide high-quality post-secondary educational opportunities for Minnesotans; and
7. Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).

LWVMN also supports the following goals:

1. Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth;
2. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit;
3. Create a business climate that will allow MN businesses to compete nationally and internationally; and
4. Ensure timely resolution of court cases.

LWVMN does not support the goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

#### **Spending Priorities**

LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are the following:

1. K-12 (regular) education,
2. Health Care, and
3. Environmental protection.

When considering specific proposals requiring choices, the League believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others.

#### **Relative Priority**

Regular education over vocational education

Vocational education over special education

Special education over community education and recreation

Health care and family support over nursing home care

Environmental protection over parks and recreation

Roads and transit over highway patrol

Job-related economic security over business incentives

Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and

Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)

HACA over Local Government Aid

The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions

### **III. Criteria for Limiting Spending**

When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria: (by priority)

1. State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed;
2. Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure;
3. Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes;
4. Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens; and
5. Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility.

The League opposes the following:

1. Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds;
2. Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services;
3. Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition; and
4. Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children.

#### IV. Efficiency

The League supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services. To this end, the League strongly supports:

1. Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems,
2. Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation.

The League also supports:

1. Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance;
2. Giving government employees more flexibility and incentive to manage the way they do their jobs;
3. Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results; and
4. Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota does not support providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education.

## VI. FIREARMS

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

**LWVMN Position:** Action to support restrictions on the sale, possession and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota. (1990)

## Details

### *Support of:*

- licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period for the purchase of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons.
- a waiting period as preferable to an instant computer background check.
- a ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts.
- mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm.
- the concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence.
- stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms.
- the ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows.

### *Opposition to:*

- an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWVMN does not support or oppose an instant computer background check.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

Following the adoption of the LWVMN position in 1990, LWVMN members played a key role at the LWVUS Convention in the adoption of a gun control position through concurrence with the Illinois position.

In January 1991, LWVMN joined "Citizens for a Safer Minnesota," a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to: supporting legislation regulating availability of military assault weapons and handguns; educating Minnesotans about the causes of and solutions for gun-related violence; promoting awareness that gun-related violence is not just a crime issue, but also affects public safety, child protection, health and the educational climate as well.

The Coalition lobbied successfully in 1992 for legislation that would prohibit handgun permits being granted to persons with a history of domestic assault; and in 1993, for the Omnibus Crime Bill which enacted a statewide ban on carrying rifles in a public place, a ban on kits that would convert semi-automatics to full machine guns, and legislation that would permit municipalities to regulate gun shops through zoning laws. The Child Accident Protection Bill passed which requires adults store loaded weapons away from children and enhanced penalties for guns in schools and drive-by shootings.

The League, as part of Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, lobbied unsuccessfully in 1996 to raise the age from 14 to 18 as the threshold for adults to store loaded weapons away from children.

In 1993 LWVMN leadership and lobbyists successfully lobbied members of Congress for passage of the Brady Bill after several years of effort. In 1995, League lobbied their representatives to stop the repeal of the Brady Bill.

League lobbyists were active in opposition to a proposal to place a "Right to Bear Arms" amendment on the ballot. LWVMN worked to counteract the NRA's argument that the Second Amendment gives everyone the right to own a weapon. Leaguers pointed out that the Supreme Court has ruled 6 times that the Second Amendment only deals with state militias -- not an individual's right to own arms.

In 1996 the League actively lobbied against an amendment to the Omnibus Crime Bill which would ease the restrictions to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

During the 1997 session the League closely followed two bills proposing a weakening of the concealed weapon legislation. Neither bill actually passed out of committee, but threatened to be attached as an amendment to other legislation. Leaguers interested in firearms issues were ready to take action, but in the end, the amendments were unsuccessful.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

*Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.*

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

## WATER RESOURCES

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a state role in the preservation and management of Minnesota's water resources through protection, allocation, conservation, pricing and interbasin transfer policies protective of Minnesota's current and future needs. (1985)

### Details

*Support of:*

- state water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility

for water resources. Support for statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water. Support for policies which:

- ⇒ recognize regional differences in supply and use.
- ⇒ integrate both ground and surface water management.
- ⇒ integrate quality and quantity management.
- ⇒ provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
- ⇒ consider future use (of water resources).
- ⇒ promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
- ⇒ provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
- ⇒ distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- a state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
  - ⇒ continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
  - ⇒ provide for education and technical assistance.
  - ⇒ require specific conservation plans from those who propose interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices. Support for rate structures which encourage conservation. Support for user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management.
- interbasin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs. Decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects, future water needs of basin of origin and conservation practices of the receiving basin.
- clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers. This process should include at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
  - ⇒ Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers.
  - ⇒ uniform legislation among Great Lakes states.
  - ⇒ federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval.
  - ⇒ interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions.
  - ⇒ increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission process

## SOLID WASTE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of measures to reduce generation of solid waste.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- state government's taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills.
- measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers.
- flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards. (1973)

## LAND USE

**LWVMN Position:** Support of an overall land use plan with maximum cooperation and implementation at the regional and local level, with state help in developing and exercising land use management, with opportunity for maximum local decision making, and with regional planning and regulation for matters of more than local concern.

### Details

#### *Support of a state plan that should:*

- be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways).
- be coordinated with plans and policies of local and regional agencies.
- require local government to exercise at least a minimum level of planning and control.
- recognize fragile or historic land, renewable resource lands, and natural hazard lands as critical areas and subject them to at least minimum control.
- require impact statements of major public and private development.
- provide financial aid for research, technical assistance and state data for local and regional governmental units.
- provide authority to local and regional governmental units to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as land banking, planned unit development, transfer of development rights, timed development ordinances

- provide for an appeals board to arbitrate conflicts among governmental bodies and between citizens and governmental bodies. (1975)

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Water:** Since the national study of water resources in 1956, LWVMN has supported state participation in interstate commissions to provide comprehensive planning for boundary waters. Many water quality bills supported by LWVMN were enacted in 1973: mandatory shoreland zoning in incorporated areas, broadened definition of public waters to include wetlands, mandatory flood plain zoning, strict drainage controls, and statewide water inventory. LWVMN participated in the Federal 208 Water Quality Study and in the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's GREAT I Study on future uses of the Mississippi. In 1978 and 1979 emphasis on noncontamination of potable water became one of LWVMN's concerns.

Legislation in the '80s concerned the managerial aspects of water. LWVMN has used the 1985 consensus to work with the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) on determining direction and issues to be covered under the EQB's ten priority issues.

In 1995 the League closely monitored some legislators attempts to relax Wetlands restrictions. The session ended without changes. In 1996 the LWVMN actively participated with the Wetlands Coalition to monitor the changes to the Wetlands Protection Act. The League wanted to keep the "no-net loss" policy on drainage ditch repair and construction..

**Air:** In 1971 LWV members reached national consensus on air quality. LWVMN supported mandatory vehicle emission inspection and the disbursement of dedicated highway trust funds to municipalities for mass transit. In 1976 LWV supported legislation banning fluorocarbon aerosol containers. Since 1981 LWV has worked to strengthen and readopt the National Clean Air Act; a bill passed in 1990. In 1982 LWVMN testified at regulatory hearings for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on maintaining or strengthening ozone and sulfur dioxide standards for the state. As a result of the hearings standards were somewhat tightened.

LWVMN has supported acid rain controls at both the state and national levels, and continues to monitor the acid rain situation both in Minnesota and other areas of the country.

**Solid Waste:** Following both state and national consensus on solid waste management in 1973, LWVMN has lobbied for bills discouraging the use of nonreturnable beverage containers (rejected by the Legislature in 1978 and 1979) and establishing regional resource recovery centers. LWVMN has supported legislation creating a deposit for beverage containers. In 1982 the League promoted the filing of a bill at the Legislature to establish a deposit law in Minnesota. The bill was considered in committee in 1984 and turned down; it was not introduced in 1985. In the 1988 session LWVMN, in coalition with other environmental groups, made a major push for deposit legislation. It failed.

In 1977 LWVMN joined other environmental groups in requesting that Reserve Mining Company be required to meet existing air and water quality standards in its disposal of taconite wastes. During the 1989 session LWVMN supported passage of amendments to the waste management statute fostering an integrated waste management system through reduction and reuse, waste recycling, yard waste composting and resource recovery. A

portion of the fees charged for disposal of solid waste is used to assist counties in their waste reduction efforts. LWVMN also supported proposed ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul requiring that food packaging be returnable, degradable or recycled, and was represented in the Advisory Committee on implementing these ordinances.

From 1990 to 1993 LWVMN continued to support legislation designed to reduce packaging waste through fees including container deposit. We also supported provisions which had mandatory recycled content requirements for products.

In 1991 we opposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens Board's granting of a permit for the Dakota County's incinerator based on LWVUS' seven minimum conditions necessary to support an incinerator.

**Hazardous Waste:** LWVMN supported the adoption by the state Legislature of the Waste Management Act of 1980, and has continued to support citizen action as the Waste Management Board seeks to site waste facilities.

Since 1984 when Minnesota became a part of the Midwest Interstate Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact, LWVMN has joined with other midwest state Leagues to monitor siting of a low level radioactive waste disposal site.

LWVMN opposed the Northern State Power Company's request in 1992 to the Public Utilities Commission to grant a Certificate of Need for dry cask storage of high-level radioactive waste at the Prairie Island facility based on Minnesota Statute Sec. 116C.72, which requires legislative consent to create a high-level radioactive waste facility in Minnesota. In 1993 a Minnesota Appeals court upheld that position. Our opposition was based on the process rather than the facility. LWVUS has granted permission for LWVMN to oppose the storage facility as proposed by NSP.

**Land Use:** State and national positions on land use were reached in 1975 after two years of study. In 1977 and 1979, LWVMN testified in Minnesota and Washington, DC, in favor of full wilderness status for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA), which was established by Congress in 1978. Since 1975 LWVMN has supported efforts to enact a state comprehensive land use plan.

In 1997 the League lobbied for mandatory state planning which would require the units of government to coordinate their plans with neighboring communities. A softer version of the bill was passed, merely recommending planning and providing assistance to those localities who choose to do it.

**Energy:** In 1977 LWVMN received a grant from the US Energy Research and Development Administration to train local League members as resource people in their communities to teach energy-saving techniques and to publish an Energy Information Directory. The LWV continues to support conservation and development of alternatives to fossil fuels.

## SOCIAL POLICY

*Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all and combat discrimination and poverty.*

### I. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**LWVUS Position:** Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of policies to ensure equality of opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons. Support of administrative enforcement of antidiscrimination laws. Support of state responsibility for and responsiveness to Indian citizens.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government. (1951)
- antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination. (1957)
- the principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private. (1961)
- adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services. (1961)
- state legislation to ensure services for Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding Indian lives and property are to be made by the Indians themselves. (1963)
- a state agency of Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds. (1963)
- the correction of racial imbalance in the schools. (1967)
- life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens. (Convention 1983)

## II. FAMILY AND CHILD ISSUES

### FAMILY VIOLENCE

**LWVMN Position:** Support for improved procedures for agencies dealing with family violence. Support for improved services for the victims.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse.
- more advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence.
- more shelters for battered women.
- a complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services.
- a continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes.
- provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence.
- a coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence. (1980)

### CHILD SUPPORT

**LWVMN Position:** Support of stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments.

#### Details

*Support of:*

- efforts to make support collections and enforcement services equally available to non-public assistance families.
- efforts to adequately publicize available services.
- providing adequate staff to enforce child support in an efficient and expeditious manner. (1982)

### CHILD PROTECTION

**LWVMN Position:** Support of adequate staffing and resources for child protection services. (1986)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- the assignment of a high priority to state and county level Child Protection Services to ensure adequate staffing and sufficient resources to provide meaningful services to families experiencing abuse and neglect.

- a Children's Trust Fund to support programs aimed at preventing the abuse and neglect of children.
- funding programs to promote good parenting and to provide support for parents, especially those in high risk groups, in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- modifications of juvenile and criminal court proceedings in cases of abuse and neglect, reducing the trauma to the child victim while still protecting the rights of the alleged abuser.

### CHILD HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care. (1987)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- public policies that provide access to comprehensive pre-natal and child health care because we are convinced of the cost effectiveness of preventive health care for pregnant women and children.
- publicly supported health insurance for pregnant women and children with family incomes up to at least 200% of the poverty level.
- publicly and privately sponsored programs that ensure adequate nutrition for pregnant and nursing mothers and young children.
- ensure adequate care for children with disabilities and chronic illness.

### CHILD CARE

**LWVUS Position:** Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty.

**LWVMN Position:** Support of coordinated public policies and funding to ensure safe, affordable, quality child care throughout the state. (1987)

#### Details

*Support of:*

- adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children.
- public policies and adequate funding at the state and county level to create and sustain quality programs, including grants and loans and resource and referral services to meet the demand.
- policies in the public and private sectors that recognize the value of the child care professional and provide adequate wages and benefits to trained child care workers.

- providing an unpaid leave of absence for the parent of a newborn or newly adopted child.

### TEENAGE PREGNANCY

**LWVMN Position:** Support prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. (1988)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- the Minnesota Department of Education requiring school districts to collect data on drop-outs for reasons of pregnancy or adolescent parenting.
- increased prevention efforts in the public schools in order to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy.
- a prevention curriculum that includes the legal and financial responsibilities of male teenage parents.
- health care providers publicizing the necessity of prenatal care and the locations of free and low cost health services.

### III. HOUSING

**LWVMN Position:** The League believes that all people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

#### Details

Support an active state role in providing long-term decent and affordable housing for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households. Specifically support programs that:

- increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities;
- preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock;
- prevent homelessness;
- promote rental housing subsidies.

Support incentives to local units of government to promote a mix of housing opportunities including home ownership and rental housing for people of all ages with very low-, low- and moderate- incomes. Support disincentives to local units of government that do not promote such a mix of housing opportunities.

Support revising the tax system to:

- narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property;
- reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households;
- encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households.

### IV. HEALTH CARE

**LWVUS Position:** The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. (1993) (See 'National Program At a Glance' for full position.)

### V. MENTAL HEALTH

**LWVMN Position:** Support of a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as "persons with mental illness"). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

#### Details

##### *Support of:*

- adequate and consistent funding for services for persons with mental illness. Public funding should be flexible, following the client's needs, yet accountable to the public.
- a range of appropriate housing options for persons with mental illness.
- a commitment process which ensures prompt and appropriate treatment for persons with mental illness while protecting their civil rights. The commitment process should enable the commitment of persons so gravely disabled by mental illness that they cannot meet their basic human needs.
- a coordinated system of quality assurance (including standards, mechanisms to monitor and the ability to take corrective action) for programs and services for persons with mental illness with an emphasis on evaluating outcomes and consumer response.
- continuing state financial responsibility for improved intensive treatment programs and adequate living conditions for persons currently served in regional treatment centers.

## VI. PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE

**LWVUS Position:** Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

**LWVMN Position:** Support for violence prevention programs in our community.

### Details

#### *Support of:*

- educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This would include support for:
  - ⇒ government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes;
  - ⇒ local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula;
  - ⇒ use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
  - ⇒ training for child care providers.
- a requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training.
- the use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality.
- efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence.
- allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior.
- the following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations.
- efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence.
- efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography.

### HISTORY OF STATE ACTION

**Antidiscrimination and ERA:** In 1949, LWVMN began a broad study of civil rights in Minnesota. During the 1950s LWVMN focused on employment based on merit and worked with other groups to secure passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act (1955), which was incorporated into the State Act Against Discrimination in 1961. During the 1960s LWVMN continued

investigating employment practices, discrimination in housing and public accommodations, the special problems of Minnesota Indians, and two factors contributing to inequality of opportunity in education (the common school district and racial imbalance). LWVMN supported formation of the Department of Human Rights in 1967 and the 1973 legislation which extended the Department's jurisdiction to all cases of discrimination based on sex, marital status, physical disability or status as a recipient of public assistance. In 1977 members supported extending coverage to age and sexual preference.

The 1972 national Convention supported the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution. In 1973 LWVMN (as a member of the state Coalition to Ratify the ERA) successfully supported ratification of ERA by the Minnesota Legislature.

Since 1975 LWVMN has continued to interpret the ERA and to work to prevent rescission. In 1983 the League vigorously supported a Minnesota ERA and opposed irrelevant amendments to the ERA.

Other anti-discrimination issues supported by LWVMN, both alone and in coalition, include: pilot centers to assist displaced homemakers; reinstatement of Medicaid funding for abortions; and elimination of discriminatory inheritance tax and insurance laws.

In 1993 LWVMN joined the coalition "It's Time Minnesota" which lobbied successfully for the inclusion of sexual preference in Minnesota's anti-discrimination legislation. A LWVMN lobbyist served on Governor Carlson's 1994 task force on gays and lesbians, instrumental in passing the Human Rights Amendment.

#### **Merging National and State Positions on Equality of Opportunity:**

The LWVUS began its study of human resources in 1964. Because the positions of the LWVUS and LWVMN are so similar, they have been merged for state action purposes on welfare, housing supply, tenants' rights, and support of anti-poverty programs. In 1967 LWVMN worked to extend opportunities for education of children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). During the 1973 legislative session LWVMN supported measures to abolish the township system of general relief, apply state standards and provide 40% state reimbursement for general relief.

The LWVMN then, and in each session since, has urged various supplements for income maintenance programs and a level of payment that would help recipients' income keep pace with escalating living costs. In 1978 LWVMN supported a sliding fee scale subsidy for child care services for low and moderate income families and continued to work for it in 1983 and 1985, as well as supporting continuation of the child care tax credit.

In 1980, LWVMN wrote and supported legislation for job sharing in state government. The League continues to support flexible employment hours and shared job positions in government and private industry. Beginning in 1983 LWVMN supported pay equity legislation. Forming the Coalition for Pay Equity with other women's and labor groups, the League acted successfully to prevent weakening of the present law.

During the 1990 session LWVMN lobbied in favor of clearer definitions of an equitable compensation relationship, provisions for reviewing and accepting plans by the Department of Employee

Relations, and penalty provisions. The revised measure was passed and signed into law.

In 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported the concept of integrated human service systems in the state, to give clients better access to services. Since 1969 LWVMN has supported tenants' rights legislation, a state uniform building code, establishment of the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and enabling legislation for agencies which assist in planning and developing housing.

**Family Violence:** The league lobbied for legislation incorporated in a 1996 crime prevention bill to fund nurseries and home visits. The visits provide early intervention in abusive situations, recognizing that the number one indicator of criminal behavior is child abuse.

**Child Support:** In 1982 Leagues throughout the state concurred with the LWV Minneapolis position on stricter enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. In subsequent years LWVMN has supported child support legislation to make services more equitable for non-Public Assistance families and to withhold income automatically for court-ordered support.

**Child Protection:** Since achieving consensus in 1986 and 1987, LWVMN has worked to support adequate staffing and resources for Child Protection Services at the county and state level.

**Child Health:** League took action in support of the Children's Health Plan and expanding pre-natal health care services. In 1997, the League strongly supported a bill to restrict the sale of tobacco to minors by licensing retailers and setting criteria for display of tobacco products. The legislation was passed and signed into law.

**Child Care:** In a coalition the League helped to found Child Care WORKS, LWVMN has aggressively worked for expansion of the Child Care Sliding Fee Program for low-income parents and development grants to increase the supply of quality child care. League supported legislation to guarantee an unpaid parental leave.

The League supported a proposal to expand the basic sliding fee program to subsidize low- and middle-income Minnesotans who pay child care expenses. The bill was incorporated into the Omnibus Human Services legislation. The League lobbied for the appropriation of money for crisis nurseries and home visiting programs.

In 1997, the League successfully lobbied for expansion of child care in the welfare reform legislation. One provision of the package was to exempt parents with babies under one year from the immediate work requirements. The parents will receive a portion of the child care subsidy and be allowed to stay at home with their infant.

**Teenage Pregnancy:** In 1988 Minnesota Leagues concurred with LWV Minneapolis' position in support of prevention efforts to lower the rate of teenage pregnancy. LWVMN testified in 1994 for the inclusion in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill for money to fund a program to teach male responsibility to teen fathers.

**Housing:** LWVMN lobbied in 1993 in support of a bill that would provide "comprehensive choice" in housing throughout the metropolitan area. The vision was to distribute a full range of housing throughout the metro area enabling very low-, low-, and moderate- income people to live near the new entry level jobs opening up in the outer ring suburbs.

In 1997 the League followed with interest legislation to increase affordable rental housing through no-interest mortgages or deferred loans. The program received \$16.4 million for the biennium.

**Health Care:** The national Health Care position arrived just in time to allow crucial lobbying by LWVMN for the establishment of Minnesota's HealthRight legislation in 1992 (now called MinnesotaCare). The League continued monitoring its development in the 1993 legislative session and also monitored rulemaking by the Minnesota Health Care Commission and Department of Health. A primary concern is that the consumers' point of view be included in Commission decisions.

LWVMN is also working with the Health Care Reform Project, a national coalition to promote health care reform at the federal level. Included in any plan the Project supports are: universal coverage and mandatory employer participation; serious cost containment; comprehensive benefits for all; and reform now.

The League concentrated its health care lobbying efforts in 1995 to prevent the erosion of the 1994 MinnesotaCare bill and to seek funding for universal coverage, a LWVMN goal to achieve by Jan. 1, 1997.

The League took action on several health care issues in 1997, including a Prescription Drug Fair Competition bill to negotiate lower drug prices for independent pharmacies. The Governor used a line item veto to eliminate the funding to allow the Department of Administration to negotiate on behalf of the pharmacies. Also, a weakened Patient Protection Act passed and was signed. We had hoped the bill would include an independent appeals process and a strong patient advocacy program., but it certainly is a good beginning.

**Mental Health:** The LWVMN Mental Health position was adopted in early 1989.

During the 1989 Legislative Session the League monitored refinements of the 1987 Comprehensive Mental Health Act. The Legislature approved a plan to shift care for mentally retarded Minnesotans from regional treatment centers (RTCs) to community-based group homes. LWVMN lobbied for community-based services for mentally ill persons as well. We supported the Legislature's direction to the Commissioner of Human Services to develop plans for downsizing RTC facilities that will not adversely affect the proper care of residents. League lobbied for appropriations for employment counselors for the mentally ill.

During the September 1989 special session LWVMN supported the concept of state funding for the major portion of the cost of state-mandated mental health services.

During the 1993 session the League supported refinements of the Comprehensive Mental Health Act. LWVMN lobbied for community-based homes for persons with mental illness. League has consistently supported increased funding for community services. We also supported the Anoka Alternatives, a fund to find housing for difficult-to-place persons at Anoka Regional Treatment Center. We supported the closing of Moose Lake Regional Treatment Center and increased funding for community services for those clients. LWVMN also supported innovative employment programs in the community which will be an ongoing concern.

In 1995 the League provided testimony in support of a bill to create delivery system pilots which would pool the resources of regional treatment centers with community dollars. In 1996 the League lobbied successfully for the continued funding for five Coordinated Employment Projects whose funding would run out on January 1, 1997. The projects provide job counseling for persons with mental illness. In 1997, the League lobbied for the additional employability projects whose funding runs out in 1998.

Bridges, a temporary housing program for persons with mental illness, was expanded in the 1997 after strong lobbying from the League. Other mental health issues that arose during the 1997 session included a cost of living increase for mental health employees, and additional funding for the relocation of Regional Treatment Centers staff into community services.

Legislation to implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Civil Commitment Task Force was successful in 1997. Funding was made available for a civil commitment training and resource center.

**Prevention of Violence:** In coalition with the Minnesota Attorney General the Violence Against Women Coalition, the Citizens Council, the Battered Women's Coalition and other groups, LWVMN has lobbied successfully for violence prevention programs at the Legislature. Minnesota now has among other innovations: anti-violence curricula in its schools with funding provided to districts that offer such curricula in grades K-12; an Office for a Violence Free Minnesota, which coordinates state-wide efforts in violence prevention; foundation grants specifically targeted to violence prevention programs; and in Ramsey County, an urban, county-wide Community Action Plan using a multi-faceted approach to end family violence. Delegates to LWVUS Convention in 1994 concurred with LWVMN violence position in its essentials following a campaign led by Minnesota delegates.

**Minnesota American Indians:** LWVMN supported creation of the Indian Affairs Commission in 1963 and lobbied in both 1967 and 1976 to retain its independent status when bills were introduced to merge it with the Department of Human Rights. In 1967 and 1976 legislative proposals recommended major changes in the composition of the Indian Affairs Commission in an attempt to adequately address the needs of both reservation and urban Indians. In both instances LWVMN worked with Indian groups and assisted in interpreting their needs to legislators.

In 1971 and 1973 LWVMN lobbied for legislation to return to the Indians their hunting, fishing and ricing rights guaranteed by early treaties. LWVMN also testified in favor of a revolving fund for Indian business development financed by 20% of a new state tax on severed mineral rights. In the 1975 Legislature LWVMN supported retrocession for the Chippewa reservation. Both in 1975 and 1977 LWVMN supported legislation to create pilot bilingual education programs in the public schools.

In 1984 and 1985 LWVMN took action in support of the Minnesota Indian Child Welfare Act, addressing the need for increased Indian involvement and decision-making in child foster care placement. In 1985 LWVMN published the fourth edition of *Indians in Minnesota*, documenting the contemporary experience of urban and reservation Indians. In 1997 a fifth edition is being prepared.

In the 1993 session LWVMN supported legislative ratification of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Indians agreement regarding the 1837 Treaty rights to hunting, fishing and gathering by the band.

Legislative ratification would have honored the rights of the Ojibwe, protected the environment and avoided a costly court fight. The Legislature failed to act and the agreement was sent to trial. The federal Court of Appeals has ruled in favor of the band following an appeal by the State of Minnesota of the federal district court's ruling also in the band's favor.

## COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN AREA LEAGUES

*The Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was established in 1962. It is an interleague organization composed of all the local Leagues in the seven-county metropolitan area which includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott and Washington counties. Through CMAL, League members work to address governmental issues of metropolitan concern.*

## METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

**CMAL Position:** Support of the development of the Metropolitan Council as the decision-making body for metropolitan needs in accordance with these criteria: efficiency and economy, equitable financing, flexibility, citizen control and responsiveness to the electorate. CMAL supports provision for coordinated metropolitan services focused through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL supports retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council with greater use of its existing powers. (1969, 1976, 1993)

### Details

#### CMAL supports:

- retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area.
  - ⇒ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials. (1969, 1976, 1993)
- an open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office; establishment of a removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population.

In the event that it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports nonpartisanship of candidates, with availability of public financing, with selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number; maintaining population as the basis for districts, election of Council members at the same time

as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law), continuance of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation. (1976, 1993)

## HOUSING

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority acting as an administrative agency providing technical assistance to communities requesting service. CMAL opposes an independent regional body separate from the Council to own and operate subsidized housing. (1981)

## HEALTH

**CMAL Position:** Support of the continuation of health planning and coordination at the metropolitan level with state and/or regional funds, if federal funds are reduced. (1981)

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1967 state Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, giving it broad assignments in areawide planning and some specific problems to work on, notably solid waste, sewage (waste water) disposal, and parks and open spaces. Its one person-one vote representation formula was strongly supported by CMAL, which also supported its role as overall planning and coordinating agency for the area, with operational boards supervising day-to-day operation of area services and local government involvement in decisions affecting them.

Since its inception the Metropolitan Council has been concerned with overall growth pattern in the metropolitan area, recognizing that areawide coordination of urban services is needed and that public investment should be channeled to achieve areawide goals. These goals and policies were incorporated into the Development Framework Guide prepared by the Council in 1974-75 with CMAL assistance; CMAL has supported legislation needed for its implementation.

In 1975 CMAL restudied and updated the governmental decision-making position, looking closely at the question of an elected or appointed Council and assessing the relationship of the Council to other local governing bodies. A survey of attitudes of local officials toward the Metropolitan Council was published in December 1976.

In 1977 CMAL supported open appointments legislation and retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council. CMAL opposed elected Metropolitan Council legislation in 1978, noting that a popularly elected body representing more than half the population of the state could not continue in the same relationship with the Legislature. In reviewing the Council's role in the Family Housing Program in 1978, CMAL expressed its concern about the Council acting as an operating agency, not as an overall planning and coordinating body.

In 1982, 1983 and 1993 CMAL testified before the Joint Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Governance in support of an appointed Metropolitan Council functioning as a regional planning and coordinating agency and the involvement of citizens and local government officials through advisory committees and

task forces. This testimony supported local jurisdictions and counties as the administrators that implement and enforce regional policy. It also supported regional services operating agencies as day-to-day providers — the implementors of policy plans adopted by the Council.

In 1997 a bill to elect the Metropolitan Council passed both houses but was vetoed by the Governor.

## FUNDING/FINANCING

### FISCAL DISPARITIES

**CMAL Position:** Support for area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move towards the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970) The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997) Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

### FINANCING METROPOLITAN SERVICES

**CMAL Position:** Support for operating and maintaining the metropolitan systems and services with a mix of funding sources specific to each service (federal, state and local funds and user fees). If a supplemental fund is created, CMAL supports additional user fees, new or increased, appropriate to the service. (1985)

#### Details

*CMAL supports:*

- improved accountability of metropolitan agencies by:
  - ⇒ uniform reporting and submittal dates of agency development programs to the Metropolitan Council.
  - ⇒ a responsible, uniform system of administrative procedures for all metropolitan agencies.
- improved accountability of the Metropolitan Council by:
  - ⇒ the establishment of a permanent legislative committee/commission for metropolitan affairs.
  - ⇒ regular reports to the legislature on regional programs for financing.
  - ⇒ regular reports and discussion sessions with local elected officials.
  - ⇒ responsible administrative procedures.

## HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Fiscal Disparities:** A major barrier to areawide development has been the multiplicity of local government units—more than 300 in the metropolitan area—each competing for tax monies. In 1971 CMAL supported the “fiscal disparities” bill which provided for sharing 40% of the growth in commercial-industrial tax base among local units of government in the metropolitan area. Nationally the bill was a first, and though it was challenged in the

courts, it was found to be constitutional. Implementation occurred in 1974 and was reflected in taxes collected in 1975.

The 1979 CMAL update paper, "The Response to Fiscal Problems in the Seven-County Area," reviewed existing and proposed programs that deal with problems created by the differences in taxing capabilities among communities in the seven-county metropolitan area. Another update, "Fiscal Disparities: An Overview," appeared in the January 1985 CMAL Quarterly. The CMAL reviewed the issue, in 1997 and completed a study, "Re-Study of Fiscal Disparities".

In 1975 CMAL supported the Metropolitan Investment Framework before the Metropolitan Council's Physical Development Committee because it furthers the goal of areawide sharing of fiscal resources to finance metropolitan services and aids in the solution of the problems of fiscal disparities. CMAL also stressed that it was a means of systematically evaluating the economic responsibilities of metropolitan government. The Investment Framework was adopted by the Council in 1977.

### SCHOOL INTEGRATION/DESEGREGATION

**CMAL Position:** Support the following measures to achieve school integration/desegregation in the metropolitan area: mandatory participation by the school districts; voluntary participation by students; combination of student exchanges, magnets and incentives; combination of incentive plans for school districts and individuals funded by state money; redrawing of school district lines (as necessary). (1991)

### HOUSING/HEALTH CARE FOR THE AGING

**CMAL Position:** Support for local planning for the housing and service needs for the elderly and disabled in the community. Support for the preparation of a local "Blueprint for Action." (1989)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports:*

- the provision of a single telephone number at the local level for information and referral for senior housing and services available in that area. (CMAL supports the city as the most appropriate provider of this service.)
- local ordinances which allow for the provision of housing and services necessary to meet the needs of the aging.
- the provision of additional health, home care, and housing support services as they become necessary. CMAL supports flexibility in the provision of these services. Providers can be in the private sector (profit or non-profit), the county, city, school district, community center, the informal network, or any combination of these.

### LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**CMAL Position:** CMAL recognizes that increased pressures for development in the entire Twin Cities area indicate the need for a strong public voice in land-use decisions. CMAL supports metropolitan-level planning, programs and policies directed toward channeling development in ways that will: (1) preserve and enhance the natural environment; (2) use public investment to the best advantage; and (3) provide area residents with diversity in choice of facilities and amenities. (1972) (Also see LWVMN and LWVUS positions.)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports*

- channeling growth so that necessary public services are provided in an efficient, orderly pattern.
- preserving the natural environment to the extent possible by protecting land and water during and after development, and from development where necessary, and preserving open space for recreation, protection and amenities.
- using land in the seven-county area to implement social goals, such as a full range of housing choices, adequate transportation, parks and the necessary facilities and amenities to enhance the quality of life.
- the Metropolitan Council should be authorized to develop the policy tools necessary to implement these goals, provided local governments are involved in decisions affecting them.

### ENVIRONMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support for a requirement that local governments adopt implementation ordinances for protection of environmental quality for review and approval by the Metropolitan Council. (1981)

**CMAL Position:** Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

#### Details

##### *CMAL supports:*

- water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities.
- Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited

water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans.

- Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority.
- Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region.
- Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

### SOLID WASTE

**CMAL Position:** Support for the establishment by the Metropolitan Council of a system for controlling the flow of solid waste for recycling and resource recovery. (1981)

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

**Land Use Planning:** CMAL published *The Land Use Puzzle* in 1972, sponsored conferences on innovations in government in 1973 and 1974, and in 1975, encouraged legislators to recommend enabling legislation for the Metropolitan Council Development Framework Guide. Specifically, CMAL asked that local planning be made mandatory and that those plans be coordinated through the Metropolitan Council. CMAL also supported 1975 legislation that provided funds for communities throughout the state to do comprehensive land use planning and established the mechanism for the Metropolitan Council to review the mandated local comprehensive plans.

**Water Resources:** In 1975 CMAL addressed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to support designation of the Metropolitan Council as the agency to assist local units of government in identifying critical water areas and in implementing steps to protect them. That year CMAL also supported designation of the Mississippi River as a Critical Area, and in 1977 supported the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission's Level B Study Report on water quality and conservation.

The Metropolitan Council adopted a Surface Water Management Plan amendment to the Development Guide in 1982, which CMAL, in general, supported. It places responsibility for management plans and implementation at the local level with broad regional guidelines. CMAL adopted at its 1993 convention a study of Regional Government Structures and Management Efforts to Provide an Adequate, Safe Water Supply. Their report, Water Supply: A Regional Perspective, was released in January 1995.

**Solid Waste:** In 1985 CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council and State Legislature. It supported mandatory source separation, cautioned against total reliance on high tech solutions to waste management, and supported the 1990 deadline for cessation of landfilling of unprocessed mixed municipal wastes.

Subsequent legislation mandated the 1990 deadline, but source separation remains voluntary unless mandated by individual metropolitan counties.

**Parks and Open Space:** With CMAL support, the 1974 Legislature passed the Parks and Open Space Bill authorizing the Metropolitan Council to set priorities for acquisition of open space in the metropolitan area. In 1975 the Council released its Development Guide chapter dealing with parks. CMAL testified before the Metropolitan Council in 1976 in support of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for parks and open space. In 1977 CMAL supported the Regional Special Use Policy Plan and Regional Trails Policy Plan. In 1978 CMAL encouraged the Council to amend the Development Guide to include the Trails Policy; the Council completed this in November 1978. In 1979 CMAL supported legislation that authorized \$27 million in bonds for acquisition and betterment of regional parks in the metropolitan area.

### TRANSPORTATION

**CMAL Position:** Support of the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency to plan and coordinate a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and to have approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position.)

#### Details

*CMAL supports:*

- various modes of transportation, both public and private: ridesharing, carpools, vanpools, paratransit, buses and deregulated taxis. A light rail transit mode can be supported if assured high ridership, economic feasibility and integration into the total transportation system.
- transportation service for the handicapped, fringe parking, and feeder services; High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, bikeways, walkways and selected reduced fares.

#### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

The 1983 position supersedes a position from 1967. In that year massive highway construction with federal funding and a privately owned bus system that was consistently losing ridership focused Twin Cities area interest on mass transit and encouraged CMAL to work for establishment of the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). In subsequent legislative sessions and interims, CMAL pressed for condemnation powers for MTC (1969) which made it possible to purchase privately owned bus companies in the metropolitan area; and adequate financing for MTC (1971) which quadrupled MTC's fiscal resources, making possible route improvements, fare subsidies, and significant progress toward a new transit system. The Legislature concluded that an extensive fixed guideway system was not economical at that time.

In 1985 CMAL supported the transfer of fare-setting authority from the Legislature to the Regional Transit Board (RTB), which passed; and supported replacing local regulation of taxis with an independent metropolitan taxicab commission under the RTB, which failed.

## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**CMAL Position:** Support of measures to ensure accountability and visibility of county government. Support of measures to improve cooperation and communication between the Metropolitan Council and county government within the metropolitan area. (1975)

### Details

- Accountability of a governmental body is obtained by the effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. While accountability to the citizenry is recognized as a responsibility of all governments, CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved as well as to participate in the election process. Accountability of county government would be increased by the following (but not limited to):
  - ⇒ public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including, for example, citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities.
  - ⇒ systematic and objective evaluation of county programs.

- ⇒ creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board, by ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting; dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments; and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set.
- ⇒ regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government.
- ⇒ full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections.

The Metropolitan Council is viewed as the regional planning and coordinating body, while the counties are viewed as administrators, implementors, and enforcers of regional policy. CMAL believes that counties should be involved in the initial planning and policy-making stages of Metropolitan Council activities in order for counties to carry out their eventual implementation.

### HISTORY OF CMAL ACTION

In 1973 CMAL began a study of counties in the Twin Cities area and their role and relationship to the Metropolitan Council. Consensus was reached in 1975. This study resulted in two publications: CMAL'S Seven Counties in Transition: A Study of the Evolving Role of the County in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and the Hennepin County Leagues' in-depth study, Hennepin County.

In 1982-83 CMAL supported counties as implementors of regional policy before the Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government.

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