



League of Women Voters of Minnesota Records

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

555 WABASHA • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102 • TELEPHONE (612) 224-5445

November 10, 1977

TO: Local League Boards/ WR Chairpersons

FROM: Maggie Brown, WR Chair, LWVMN

RE: Welfare funding cut-off for abortions

With the recent national legislation disallowing the use of federal welfare monies for abortion, it is inevitable that our legislators will be debating a comparable bill here in Minnesota after January.

The abortion issue itself was determined by the US Supreme Court so the question has arisen whether any level of government has the right to discriminate against any segment of the populace on the basis of economic status.

Upon checking with Mr. Warren Nyhus of the Medical Assistance Section of the Minnesota Welfare Department we found that in most instances funding is on a case by case basis. This was the breakdown:

Abortion is allowed to save the life of the mother.

Sterilization is allowable for both sexes if the party in question is competent and has given prior written authorization. (Mr. Nyhus stated that when under 21 years of age sterilization is allowed only if it can be proven that not having it done is life threatening.)

Case by case review is necessary for the following:

Some expensive surgery

Cosmetic Surgery

Weight control surgery

Sex change operations

All of the case by case questions must have accompanying medical documents stating the necessity of the procedure.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota maintains its position against discrimination based on economic status. The question has arisen then, whether we should oppose state legislation on this basis with regard to this bill. Is there enough member understanding to differentiate the question of discrimination and abortion on this issue?

It should be noted that abstaining completely could raise a question of whether we do not carry our anti-discrimination belief into this area and/or by abstaining imply an anti-abortion stand. Conversely, would abstaining reinforce the understanding

that we do not have a position on abortion itself and therefore will not be involved?

However, we need local league board feedback on this to determine how we should proceed.

It would greatly appreciated if you could poll your board (or even your members) on how this should be handled! Is there enough member understanding to approach this on the discrimination level only or is there too much emotional tie-in to differentiate the difference so that we should not.

Please either call or write either the state office or myself (Maggie Brown, Chaska, 442-3590) with your opinion(s) on this issue.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MINNESOTA

555 WABASHA • ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102 • TELEPHONE (612) 224-5445

To: Local League Boards/HR Chairpersons
From: Maggie Brown, HR Chair, LWVMN
Re: Welfare Funding Cut-off for Abortions
Date: November 15, 1977

With the recent national legislation disallowing the use of federal welfare monies for abortion, it is inevitable that the Minnesota legislators will be debating the use of state monies for abortion when they reconvene in January.

The abortion issue itself was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, so the question now arises whether any level of government has the right to discriminate against any segment of the populus on the basis of economic status.

Upon checking with Mr. Warren Nyhus of the Medical Assistance Section of the Minnesota Welfare Department, we found that in most instances funding is on a case-by-case basis. This was the breakdown:

- . Abortion is allowed to save the life of the mother. Prior to September the department policy of case-by-case review was followed, but funding was not limited to a life-saving criteria.

(Over)

- . Sterilization is allowable for both sexes if the party in question is competent and has given prior written authorization. (Mr. Nyhus stated that when the client is under 21 years of age, sterilization is allowed only if it can be proved that not having it done is life threatening.)
- . Case-by-case review is necessary to get funding for the following:
 - Some expensive surgery
 - Cosmetic surgery
 - Weight control surgery
 - Sex change operations
- . All of the case-by-case questions must have accompanying medical documents stating the necessity of the procedure.
- . There is no medical procedure which is automatically refused.

The League of Women Voters of Minnesota maintains its position against discrimination based on economic status. Should we oppose state legislation denying abortion to the poor on this basis? Is there enough member understanding to differentiate the question of discrimination from that of abortion?

Our inaction on this issue could raise several questions. Do we not carry our anti-discrimination belief into this area? Does abstaining imply an anti-abortion stand? Conversely, would refraining from action reinforce that we do not have a position on abortion itself and therefore will not be involved?

We need local League feedback on this to determine how we should proceed. Poll your Board (or even your members) on how this should be handled! Is there enough member understanding to oppose this discrimination, or is the emotional tie-in with abortion too great?

Please return the following to the state office by December 20.

1. Yes, there is enough member understanding on this issue to allow us to take action on the discrimination. _____
2. No, there is not enough member understanding - refrain from any action. _____

LWV of _____

Abortion and the "Right-to-Life": facts, fallacies, and fraud

James W. Prescott

I Cross-Cultural Studies

program of the March of Dimes. Anti-abortion leaders are reported to have said that parents have no right to decide whether

[1978]



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The League of Women Voters of Stevens County

MORRIS, MINNESOTA 56267

MAY 15 1979

May 14, 1979

An Open Letter to the State and National Boards

Dear Board Members:

In December, 1977, the National Board publicly supported use of federal funds for abortions for poor people. The State Board voiced support of this action, and a few of our most valuable local members resigned. A minority among us have long pondered what, if anything ought be done. Action was finally decided upon in the form of this letter at our annual meeting in April.

We would like to urge the Boards to remember that League is based on the ideas of consensus. It appears that in this case the National Board interpreted the results of consensus on other issues in such a way as to allow it to take a stand on the abortion issue. In short, the National Board acted as a court or interpretive body rather than an executive arm of League.

We realize that there is a fine line being drawn here, and the line cannot always be discerned. We do not doubt the intentions of the board to remain on the proper side of the line. However, abortion is a highly sensitive and controversial issue, and the League has never held a consensus on the issue. We therefore feel the National Board overstepped the fine line when it took a direct action that indirectly involves support of abortion.

It is not our intent in this letter to imply any kind of a stand on abortion. We merely wish to urge the State and National Boards not to take action that forces some members into supporting a position on a major controversial issue when they have not been given the right to express their opinion through the consensus process.

Sincerely

The Stevens County League of Women Voters

Anne S. Uehling

Anne S. Uehling
Member

902 W. 4th St., Morris