



***THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN
VOTERS
OF ILLINOIS***

WHERE WE STAND

2005-2007 Program

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FOREWORD

Where We Stand 2005-2007 is the platform of the League of Women Voters of Illinois. It is a companion to ***Impact on Issues***, the League of Women Voters of the United States' program book. Taken together, these publications and the ***League Principles*** (pg. 1) form the basis for all action taken by Illinois Leagues on state and national issues.

PROGRAM ***Where We Stand*** reflects the LWVIL program – state positions and action foci – adopted at the 2005 Convention and is designed to assist local Leagues in using the state program effectively. The material is organized into four topic sections: Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. Each section begins with a summary of relevant LWVUS positions and major action taken by Illinois Leagues under those positions. LWVIL positions are then listed in full, followed by a brief history (background) of how the League arrived at the positions and recent action taken, with references to the interrelationship between positions. A two page, camera-ready position summary, ***Positions in Brief***, is included; local Leagues are encouraged to reprint this section for their members.

ACTION Local Leagues are encouraged to apply national and state positions to local and/or regional issues. Before taking action on national issues, local Leagues must consult with the LWVIL Issues and Action VP and the national League. Before taking action on statewide issues, local Leagues must consult with the LWVIL Issues and Action VP. On regional issues, local Leagues must consult with all affected Leagues. See “Action Guidelines for Local Leagues” (pg. 66) for consultation guidelines.

PURPOSE The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots, multi-issue organization. Any citizen over 18, male or female, may become a member of the League. The League's purposes are:

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

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Price: \$4.00 plus tax; postage and handling: \$2.00

LEAGUE PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters Believes:

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

Action Under Principles

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

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

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS 2005-2007 POSITIONS IN BRIEF

The following are the *Positions in Brief* for the League of Women Voters of Illinois. Prior to application of the state positions at the local and/or regional level, Leagues should refer to the complete position, including background and previous action.

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS: *The Illinois League takes action on the state level in the following public policy areas based on these LWVUS positions: citizen rights, including citizen's right to know/citizen participation, individual liberties and public policy on reproductive choices; Congress and the Presidency; election process, including apportionment, campaign finance, and selection of the President; and voting rights.*

CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENTS: The League supports implementation of provisions for governmental change in the Local Government Article, and amendments to achieve merit selection of judges, a progressive, graduated income tax, the indirect statutory initiative and the recall of elected judges. The League maintains its support for positions already achieved in the Constitution but which may require effort to preserve.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE: The League supports expanded citizen initiative powers to change the structure of county government. Petition requirements for citizen-initiated change should be a percentage of actual voters in a recent jurisdiction-wide election. The League supports changes in the Illinois County Executive Act to provide a clear separation of powers between the legislative and the executive branches and easily understood referendum language.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE: The League supports the increased use of intermediate sanctions in the community. Judges should retain discretion to choose between imprisonment and probation for most offenses. The League supports a sufficient number of trained probation officers and other court personnel, prompt trials, enforcement of jail standards and a system of bail that does not rely on financial ability as a criterion for pretrial release. Correctional services should conform to national professional standards, with programs and services that offer the opportunity for self-improvement. The League believes that the justice system must be adequately funded to carry out its goals. State funds should emphasize community sanctions over the construction of prisons. The League supports the expansion of prevention and treatment programs in order to ease the burden on the criminal justice system.

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION: The League supports abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

GUN CONTROL: The League supports legislative controls to stop the proliferation of private ownership of handguns and their irresponsible use. The League advocates restricting access to semi-automatic assault type weapons.

SCHOOLS: The League supports a system of high quality elementary and secondary schools for all children in Illinois, which provides for local control of school program and budget within minimum program requirements set by the State. The State should provide leadership to local communities for program development and should set standards for recognition and accreditation of schools. The effectiveness of educational programs should be evaluated regularly. The League favors minimum standards for graduation and promotion of students. The League supports increased professionalism for teachers including stringent teacher preparation standards, comprehensive teacher and principal evaluations, changes in tenure and increased teacher compensation. The State should assume the major responsibility for funding public schools and guarantee an adequate level of financial support. League believes that charters should be established by local school boards and that the Illinois State Board of Education should continue to monitor the progress of existing charter schools before supporting further expansion.

STATE ELECTION LAWS: The League supports uniform election laws and procedures throughout the state to ensure the integrity of the election system and opposes term limits for members of the General Assembly. The League believes that a good election system should provide stability and continuity of governance and should produce a legislature that addresses the problems of society effectively. It should be resistant to both outright fraud and other forms of political manipulation.

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

STATE REDISTRICTING: The League supports a redistricting process, which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS POSITIONS: *The Illinois League takes action on international relations issues only at the request of the LWVUS. These positions include: arms control; military policy and defense spending; trade; United Nations; and U.S. relations with developing countries.*

NATURAL RESOURCES POSITIONS: *The Illinois League takes action on the state level in the following public policy areas based on these LWVUS positions: agriculture policy; environmental protection and pollution control; natural resources; public participation; and resource management.*

LAND USE: The League supports development of a comprehensive land use policy for Illinois that provides for orderly growth while preserving the environment, conserving natural resources and providing needed open space. The State should identify, plan for and have the final authority over key and critical areas within the state. Standards and guidelines for land use should be developed by the State with local governments making purely local decisions. At every stage there should be citizen input. The State should plan for adequate supplies of low and moderate income housing with every community providing a percentage under some kind of fair share plan. The League favors regional planning agencies with mandatory and continuous funding from local, regional and state sources. The League supports state enabling legislation for development impact fees.

LARGE-SCALE LIVESTOCK FACILITIES: The League supports strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels to include statewide environmental controls, public hearings prior to siting and regional and/or county control of siting.

PESTICIDES: The League supports reduction of exposure to all pesticides. The use of non-toxic alternatives should be encouraged.

SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS: *The Illinois League takes action on the state level in the following public policy areas based on these LWVUS positions: child care; early intervention for children at risk; equality of opportunity, including opposition to school vouchers and tuition tax credits, employment issues, affirmative action, fair housing, and equal rights; fiscal policy (see Government); gun control (see Government); health care; meeting basic human needs; urban policy; and violence prevention.*

CHILDREN'S SERVICES: The League believes that the State should play the leading role in meeting the needs of children and their families and have the primary role in funding to ensure that quality services are equitably available throughout the state. The League supports a continuum of community-based services that strengthens and preserves families and fosters healthy growth and development of children. Prevention and early intervention should have high priority. The League supports a juvenile court system that provides opportunities for effective protection, treatment, and rehabilitation. Detention should be reserved for delinquent children who meet professional screening criteria and provided separately from adult programs. The League opposes the automatic transfer of children to the criminal court and the death penalty for children.

INCOME ASSISTANCE: The League supports income assistance and supportive services for all low-income individuals and families.

MENTAL HEALTH: The League supports a comprehensive and coordinated system of treatment and rehabilitation services for mentally ill adults and children. There should be adequate funding, planning, program standards, and personnel training requirements for both state facilities and community programs. The League supports a broad array of adequate and accessible community services. Although primary responsibility should rest with the state, funding from local, federal, and non-governmental sources should be encouraged. A system of local boards to levy taxes, administer all funds, and to plan and coordinate services should be required throughout the state. The State should require local governments to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.

ACTION FOCI and STUDIES

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK: Promote efforts to increase voter education, reduce barriers to the electoral process, and improve election procedures based on findings of the Election Administration Reform Committee including monitoring the implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. Assess and strengthen citizen participation in the state legislative process through the Democracy Project.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING: Promote efforts to provide stable, reliable and adequate revenues for public education and other social services.

STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: Investigate the need for a State Constitutional Convention. The Constitution of the State of Illinois requires that the question of a need for a constitutional convention be submitted to the voters every twenty years, if not sooner. The question was last submitted to the voters in 1988.

IMMIGRATION: Study how Illinois should respond to the challenges and opportunities of immigration in the areas of economic policy, social policy, which includes education, and the governmental process.

GOVERNMENT

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Positions and Major Action by the Illinois League Under the LWVUS Positions

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 agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

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

LWVIL action The League of Women Voters of Illinois approved a recommendation from the Issues and Action Committee in late 2003 to assess how well Illinois citizens are represented by the elected officials they send to Springfield. Fitting in with the core mission of *Making Democracy Work*, the **Democracy Project** is designed to strengthen citizen participation and restore public confidence in our state government.

The need for the project became evident in the spring of 2003 when over 250 shell bills were advanced to third reading in the House with little description of substance. On the last two days of session, 26 of those shell bills were used as vehicles for substantial legislation including budget legislation leaving citizens and many legislators without time to have input. In 2004, League members monitored bills, including shell bills, in the General Assembly. Local Leagues conducted legislative interviews in district with their elected officials soliciting a broad range of feedback on shell bills. During the interviews, ways to empower rank and file members throughout the legislative process began to emerge.

The second phase of the project included research done by LWVIL staff. Political science and policy experts in Illinois were interviewed and asked how they viewed the process and if they felt it involved meaningful public input. This input from experts helped the League formulate our survey on legislative process for 2005 legislative interviews. Legislative leaders were interviewed by the Democracy Project Committee. In both sets of interviews some expressed opinions that the current system is running well and others that the system needs improvements.

In the spring of 2005, local League members conducted the annual legislative interviews with their local legislators using the legislative process questionnaire. Additionally, in April, LWVIL held Lobby Day in Springfield where League members acted as an "Observer Corps". These members met with available local legislators and observed the legislative process. Responses from legislative interviews and Lobby Day are being collected and summarized.

CITIZEN RIGHTS

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

LWVIL action Since the adoption of Illinois' Open Meetings Act in 1957 and revisions/ amendments to the act in 1995, LWVIL has supported legislation to strengthen the act and opposed proposals that would weaken it. An LWVIL memo describing changes in the law and copies of a new Guide to the Illinois Open Meetings Act prepared by the Illinois Attorney General were distributed to local Leagues in 1995. Local Leagues have used the act frequently while monitoring their local governments. In 1983, LWVIL supported the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Records Act, which allow citizens, members of civic organizations and the media to have access to documents, records and reports that state and local governments keep on file. In 2004, LWVIL opposed legislation which would have limited the time to sue after receiving notice of denial of appeal of a request for disclosure of documents. The League continues to monitor the implementation of these acts.

Individual Liberties (1982): Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

LWVIL action In 2000, LWVIL supported a series of legislative initiatives designed to codify in Illinois the Federal Violence Against Women Act. If passed, these initiatives would have provided civil remedies for gender based violence. Additionally, LWVIL supported legislation requiring the Secretary of State to determine the extent of racial profiling in traffic stops. In 2003, LWVIL Convention delegates approved a Will of the Convention calling for LWVUS to work for abolition of the USA PATRIOT Act (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism). Many local Leagues held forums to educate members and the public on provisions of the Act. In 2004, League members were asked to support the Security and Freedom Ensure (SAFE) Act that addresses some of the most problematic provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices (1983): Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

LWVIL action LWVIL supports measures that protect a woman's access to reproductive health care, including the Freedom of Choice Act, and bills to assure safe entrance to health care facilities. It opposes efforts to require parental consent and notification. In 1999, League opposed legislative efforts to prohibit so-called "partial-birth" abortions and efforts to restrict the use of Medicaid monies to fund abortions. League was successful in persuading the Governor to veto a bill which would have banned payment for medically necessary abortions for women receiving Medicaid health benefits.

CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Congress (1972, revised 1982): Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

LWVIL action No recent action.

The Presidency (1976, revised 1982): Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

LWVIL action No recent action.

ELECTION PROCESS

Apportionment (1966, revised 1982): Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

LWVIL action The League has supported apportionment based on population and a state apportionment process open to the public (see LWVIL State Redistricting position, pg. 41).

Campaign Finance (1974, revised 1982): 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.

LWVIL action The League has supported public financing of campaigns for all state offices, and campaign finance and government ethics reforms in Illinois. In 1995, the League joined the Task Force on Campaign Finance Reform in Illinois, a project of Illinois Issues and the Institute for Public Affairs, to research and promote public discussion of the role of money in politics. The final report of the project, Tainted Democracy: How Money Distorts the Election Process In Illinois and What Must Be Done to Reform the Campaign Finance System, was published in January of 1997. In 1996, the LWVIL offered a workshop at the fall Regional meetings. In 1997, the LWVIL Education Fund received a grant from the Joyce Foundation to study the feasibility of building a statewide coalition to conduct educational outreach on the issue. The study resulted in a two-year grant to the Education Fund from the Joyce Foundation beginning in September 1997, to build a statewide organization, the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR), to promote public understanding, support, and advocacy for reform of the campaign finance system in Illinois. This grant was renewed in the fall of 1999 for two years. In the spring of 2001, ICPR began the process of spinning off as a separate not-for-profit entity.

In April of 1998, the LWVIL Education Fund received a \$19,285 one-year grant from the LWVUS to create a statewide public dialogue about campaign finance reform.

In the 1998 spring legislative session, the General Assembly passed ethics legislation. The League was generally supportive of the measure as a first step in reforming campaign finance in Illinois. In August of 2000, a lower state court judge ruled the State Gift Ban Act (P.A. 90-0737, the 1998 Ethics and Campaign Finance Reform bill) unconstitutional because it prohibited gifts above a "nominal" value. The Illinois Supreme Court upheld the Act in May 2002.

In the spring of 1999, the statewide LWVIL committee initiated HB 2602, a contributions limits bill, during the spring legislative session. The bill passed the Illinois House

Election and Campaign Reform Committee with a bipartisan vote, but died in the House Rules Committee

In November 1999, a bill was introduced late in the veto session to overturn the mandatory electronic filing component of the 1998 Campaign Finance Reform law. Pressure was exerted through press contacts and advocacy on the part of local League members and the bill was shelved.

During the 2000 session the statewide Campaign Finance Reform Committee worked to forward legislation focused on public funding, a statewide voter guide and the elimination of direct corporate and union contributions.

In 2001, local Leagues circulated petitions calling for ethics reform legislation. The LWVIL participated on the Illinois Voters Guide task force that presented its final report in 2001. The League also initiated a second contribution limits bill (HB 3341) that passed the Election and Reform Committee but died in the House Rules Committee. Working with the Campaign Finance Reform Coalition (CFRC), League supported legislation to ban gambling contributions to campaigns, reinstate ethics legislation and promote a statewide voters guide for constitutional officers.

In 2002, the League and the CFRC distributed petitions supporting ethics and asked candidates for state constitutional office and the state legislature to sign an ethics pledge. In addition, the League and CFRC worked for approval of legislation (P.A. 92-0853) which barred government officials from soliciting campaign contributions from people or businesses they regulate, license, or inspect, and set a \$100 a year limit on gifts from lobbyists to elected officials.

In 2003, LWVIL and CFRC supported legislation to prohibit political activity by state employees on state time, create ethics commissions with enforcement powers for both the legislative and executive branches, and increase disclosure requirements for special interest groups that buy broadcast time, among other reforms. In the fall 2003 veto session, a comprehensive ethics package passed. Local League members lobbied their legislators and LWVIL participated in a Springfield press conference along with other Campaign Finance Reform Coalition members.

Delegates to the 2003 LWVIL Convention re-adopted the Making Democracy Work Action Focus that includes promotion of campaign finance reform legislation.

In addition, after reviewing the League position on the merit selection of judges (see Constitution Implementation and Amendments, pg. 10), the delegates to the 2003 LWVIL Convention adopted a position allowing the League to advocate for the public financing of judicial elections which constitutes an opportunity to limit the size and type of campaign contributions as a means of combating undue influence in the election process.

Selection of the President (1970, revised 1982, updated 2004): Promote the election of the President and the Vice President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the Electoral College; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

LWVIL action The LWVUS 2002 Convention adopted a review of this position and Illinois League members participated in the process (see LWVUS Voting Rights, this section, and LWVIL State Election Laws position, pg. 31).

VOTING RIGHTS (1976, revised 1982): Protect the right of every citizen to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

LWVIL action Illinois Leagues have worked to increase the accessibility of polling places for the disabled, to expand voter registration opportunities in the state, and to pass the National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter) that was signed into law in 1993. During the summer of 2001, Illinois local Leagues participated in the LWVUS survey of election officials. The survey's findings were published in November 2001. At the same time, LWVIL conducted its own survey of Illinois election authorities. (See LWVIL State Election Laws on page 16 for results of this survey.) Illinois Leagues also acted in support of the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) that Congress passed in 2002. This major piece of legislation calls for numerous election reforms that affect many parts of the electoral process. Among HAVA's requirements is one that each state form a planning committee to help guide its implementation within the state. The LWVIL president served on Illinois' planning committee for voter education and outreach.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation (revised 1982 and 2000): Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress. Support restoration of an annual, predictable federal payment to the District to compensate for revenues denied and expenses incurred because of the federal presence.

LWVIL action The LWVIL supported the agenda of the national League at the LWVUS 2000 Convention, which continues to advocate for DC voting rights, the right of self-government and an annual federal payment to compensate the District for revenues denied and expenses incurred due to the presence of the federal government. LWVUS continues to designate DC Rights as a 2005 legislative priority. Local Leagues support this effort by responding to LWVUS action alerts.

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENTS

Support for League positions to implement, amend and uphold the 1970 Illinois Constitution.

Position in Brief: The League supports implementation of provisions for governmental change in the Local Government Article, and amendments to achieve merit selection of judges, the indirect statutory initiative and the recall of elected judges. The League maintains its support for positions already achieved in the Constitution but which may require effort to preserve.

CONSTITUTIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENTS (1977, 1980, 1981, 1988, 1998 and 2003): The League supports the following:

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

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

In addition, the League opposes constitutional amendments to provide for optional, compulsory or advisory referenda for statutes initiated by the legislature. The League supports statutory provisions requiring that those who pass and sign petitions be registered voters, and opposes requiring a representative geographical distribution of signers or petitions. (Note: In 1999, the US Supreme Court invalidated Colorado's requirement that referenda circulators be registered voters. In response to these rulings, the Illinois General Assembly changed the Illinois Election Code in 2001. Illinois law now conforms to the Federal Constitutional voting requirements that circulators be at

least 18 years old and a United States citizen. (This change in the Election Code essentially voids the LWVIL position that petition passers and signers be registered voters.)

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

Background Ratification of the 1970 Constitution was the culmination of almost thirty years of League effort to repair or replace the Constitution of 1870. Much of the credit for passage of a resolution by the General Assembly in 1967 to call a Constitutional Convention can be attributed to the work of the Constitutional Study Commission chaired by Representative Marjorie Pebworth, LWVIL President, 1961-63.

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

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

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

At a statewide meeting in 1970, the League gave its approval to the work of the Constitutional Convention. Again an all-out campaign was waged for ratification of the proposed constitution and three of the four separate submission items: merit selection of judges and single-member districts, neither of which passed, and the 18-year-old vote which was adopted. The League took no position on capital punishment.

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

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

The 1979 LWWIL Convention adopted a study of the process of public initiative, referendum and recall for Illinois. Positions reached in this study are now a part of this item.

The 1987 LWWIL Convention adopted a study of the need for a Constitutional Convention with direction that it be completed in time for the League to play a role in affecting the outcome of the November 1988 referendum on the issue. Members concluded overwhelmingly that a Constitutional Convention was not needed at that time.

The League's 1969 position (reaffirmed in 1979) on reducing the size of the legislature with single-member districts and eliminating cumulative voting was implemented in 1980 with the passage of the cutback amendment. This position was dropped in 1989 because it had been achieved.

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

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

However, at the 2001 LWWIL Convention, a Will of the Convention Motion directed the LWWIL Board to reexamine the merit selection position to determine "a plan of action for implementation of the position in the current political environment." Convention delegates wanted to know if the original study allowed for incremental steps to ensure an independent judiciary.

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

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

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

LWVIL action

- Protected the League's position for an appointed State Board of Education with authority to appoint a State Superintendent by opposing attempts to abolish the Board, elect Board members or elect the Superintendent.
- Opposed proposals to restrict the consideration of appropriations and substantive legislation to single sessions of the legislature.
- Opposed efforts to make the Revenue article more restrictive.
- For action on a graduated income tax, see LWVIL State Fiscal Policies position, page 37.
- Opposed efforts to abolish judicial retention, a system by which a sitting judge runs on a nonpartisan ballot on his or her record only.
- Successfully supported an amendment on the November 1998 ballot calling for the appointment of two citizen members to the Courts Commission. A commission with authority to discipline judges was part of the League's position on the Constitution in 1970.
- Played a leadership role in coordinating opposition to a proposed constitutional amendment scheduled to appear on the November 1990 ballot. The Tax Accountability Amendment sought to require a three-fifths vote of the General Assembly to increase taxes. In the belief that the proposal went beyond the limited citizen initiative allowed under the Constitution and was contrary to the principles of responsible fiscal policy, the LWVIL formed a coalition which filed an *amicus* brief in the successful legal challenge to the amendment. The League successfully opposed an effort in the state legislature to approve a similar constitutional amendment for the November 1996 ballot.
- Undertook a vigorous campaign to defeat the referendum for a Constitutional Convention on the November 1988 ballot, joining the Committee to Preserve the Illinois Constitution and participating extensively at both the state and local levels in urging a No vote on Con-Con. The League's efforts were successful, with voters rejecting the Constitutional Convention call by a 2-1 margin.

For action on constitutional proposals made under other LWVIL positions, see:

Term Limits (State Election Laws, pg. 31)

School Finance (Schools, pg. 24)

Right to bail (Criminal Justice, pg. 16)

Laws protecting children (Children's Services, pg. 58)

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Support for expanded citizen initiative powers to address county government structure and support for changes in the Illinois County Executive Act.

Position in Brief: The League supports expanded citizen initiative powers to change the structure of county government. Petition requirements for citizen-initiated change should be a percentage of actual voters in a recent jurisdiction-wide election. The League supports changes in the Illinois County Executive Act to provide a clear separation of powers between the legislative and the executive branches and easily understood referendum language.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE (1991): Citizens in each county should have the power to initiate change in the structure of county government. Structure refers to form of government; number of county board members; single member, at-large or multimember districts or a combination thereof; county board chairman elected at-large or by peers; or elected county executive.

Signature requirements for the petition process for citizen-initiated change in the structure of county government must be reasonable. The number of signatures needed should be a percentage of the actual voters in a recent jurisdiction-wide election rather than a percentage of the registered voters in the jurisdiction. Citizens who have successfully completed the initiative process should be assured of ballot access.

The Illinois County Executive Act should provide a clear separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches. The Act should provide easily understood referendum language for non-home rule counties voting to adopt the county executive form of government.

County legislative bodies should have the right to require independently elected county officials to adhere to the same personnel and procurement systems as appointed county department heads.

Background Delegates to the 1989 LWVIL Convention adopted a county government structure study. The experiences of four Leagues spurred the study and formed the basis for concurrence.

Although Peoria citizens, by League-initiated referendum, voted three to one in favor of reducing their county board from 27 to 9 members, the board refused to accede to the voters' wishes. Subsequently, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that, under present law, a citizen-initiated referendum on the size of a county board is not binding.

The DuPage County ILO studied the county executive form of government and decided that it might be suited to their county's needs. After examining the Illinois County Executive Act, the League found many problems. In particular, under the current Act,

the county executive serves as the head of both the legislative and executive branches, which does not provide the traditional system of checks and balances valued in the United States. Because of this and other flaws, the DuPage ILO was unable to recommend that their county adopt this form of government.

The Lake County ILO agreed with the DuPage County ILO that the Illinois County Executive Act was flawed but preferred a different form of county leadership for Lake County: a county board president elected-at-large. Because the Peoria decision denies citizens the legal power to institute an at-large chair, the Lake County ILO also recognized the need to empower Illinois citizens with the authority to enact binding referenda on the structure of county government.

The Cook County ILO was successful in working to increase safeguards against patronage and procurement favoritism in county government. The League worked for the enactment of a county requirement that independently elected department heads (e.g., sheriff, clerk, recorder of deeds) must abide by the same personnel and procurement procedures as appointed department heads. Leagues participating in the LWVIL study wanted to be able to support state legislation that would give their counties the right to enact similar requirements.

A grant from the Illinois State Bar Association enabled the League to fund research by a law student on state court decisions on citizen initiative. The study included petition requirements for various citizen referenda in Illinois and a comparison with citizen initiative requirements across the country.

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

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Support for improved criminal justice procedures and alternatives to incarceration.

Position in Brief: The League supports the increased use of intermediate sanctions in the community. Judges should retain discretion to choose between imprisonment and probation for most offenses. The League supports a sufficient number of trained probation officers and other court personnel, prompt trials, enforcement of jail standards and a system of bail that does not rely on financial ability as a criterion for pretrial release. Correctional services should conform to national professional standards, with programs and services that offer the opportunity for self-improvement. The League believes that the justice system must be adequately funded to carry out its goals. State funds should emphasize community sanctions over the construction of prisons. The League supports the expansion of prevention and treatment programs in order to ease the burden on the criminal justice system.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE (1972, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1989, revised 1995): The League supports the expansion of prevention and treatment programs to ease the burden on the criminal justice system.

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

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

Courtroom Procedures The League supports improvements in courtroom procedures that serve to minimize confusion and delay and increase fairness and efficiency. Trials should be prompt, with a limit on the time the accused can be held in jail prior to trial.

Sufficient numbers of well-paid and well-trained judges, assistant state's attorneys, public defenders and other court personnel are essential. Uniform standards should be used for appointing public defenders.

Sentencing Laws and Procedures The League believes that judges should retain the discretion to choose between imprisonment and probation for most offenses and opposes the proliferation of non-probationable offenses.

The League believes that there should be strict penalties and enforcement for all crimes committed with a handgun or an assault weapon (see LWVIL Gun Control position, pg. 22).

The League supports reduction in time served as an incentive for good conduct by inmates. Such credits should be incorporated into the sentencing structure and should not be revoked without due process.

The League believes that a body, free from political influence, should make recommendations that promote certainty and fairness in sentencing, develop guidelines that provide greater uniformity and monitor the fiscal impact and effect on prison populations.

Alternatives to Incarceration The League supports the concept of pretrial diversion. The League supports the increased use of a range of intermediate sanctions in the community and the development of screening and supervision standards to ensure their appropriate use. The community must be educated regarding these alternatives.

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

Illinois Department of Corrections The League supports correctional services that conform to national professional standards.

The League believes that offenders are entitled to mail, telephone calls, visits from relatives, extended family visits, furloughs, the opportunity to voice grievances, and access to information in their case records.

Education and job training for inmates should be provided in conjunction with the boards of education, private industry and unions.

The League supports pre-release planning to bridge the gap between prison and the community.

The League supports mandatory supervised release and the provision of community services to offenders, particularly when first released. Technical violations of mandatory supervised release need to be carefully defined and uniformly reported.

Citizen Involvement The criminal justice system should make use of professionally directed volunteers who have been carefully screened and trained. The League supports citizen involvement in monitoring court proceedings and assessing the needs for improved court facilities. An independent citizen's committee should monitor Illinois correctional facilities.

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

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

The League supports funding to guarantee humane prison conditions and to provide programs and services that offer the opportunity for self-improvement.

The League believes that state funds should emphasize community sanctions over the construction of more prisons.

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

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

See also LWVIL Gun Control position, pg. 22, which became a separate position in 1989 and LWVIL Death Penalty Abolition position, pg. 20, which was separated in 2005.

LWVIL action The League helped create a system of probation with state standards and funding; opposed an amendment to the Illinois Constitution that limits the right to bail; and participated in the Governor's Task Forces on Prison Crowding, Detention Standards, Mentally Retarded/ Mentally Ill Offenders, and Crime and Corrections.

League's action in the 1990's to date includes:

- Co-sponsored forums to educate professionals and the public on principles of restorative justice, an approach that balances healing for the victim, offender accountability and community safety.
- Advocated for resources that enable probation to carry out its mission; helped to establish an array of intermediate sanctions for probation violators; and called for community supervision and treatment of nonviolent offenders as essential programs that save financial resources.
- Opposed legislation that expanded the use of mandatory prison sentences, opposed attempts to establish chain gangs.
- Supported measures that prohibit sexual conduct between staff and offenders; and supported legislation that prohibits shackling inmates when giving birth.
- Promoted the development and funding of programs that meet the needs of female offenders; co-sponsor of the annual "Mothers in Prison, Children in Crisis" Rally.
- Called attention to the needs of the mentally ill offender.
- Urged the Department of Corrections to retain educational and vocational programs as a means to reduce recidivism; supported Second Chance legislation that removes barriers to employment for nonviolent offenders.

The League works with the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts on an Evidence-Based Practices Initiative and monitors meetings of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. The League works in coalition with the John Howard Association, the Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers, the Illinois Probation and Court

Services Association, and the Council of Advisers to Reduce Recidivism through Employment.

(See LWWIL Mental Health position, pg. 63; for action on securing voting rights for detainees, see LWWIL State Election Laws position, pg. 31)

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION

Support for abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

Position in Brief: The League supports abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION (2001): The League supports abolition of the death penalty in Illinois. The League supports abolition of the death penalty because it does not function as an appropriate punishment for the following reasons:

- 1) In practice, the death penalty is unfair, it targets the poor and other vulnerable people—people who are mentally ill, mentally retarded, brain-damaged, and members of an ethnic or racial minority group.
- 2) The death penalty is not a deterrent. States without the death penalty—Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan—have crime rates equal to or less than that of Illinois.
- 3) The nations with which we most identify—the nations of the European Union and Canada, for example—have abolished the death penalty and consider it a violation of human rights.
- 4) The death penalty does not serve the interests of family members of victims since the necessary and lengthy appeals process postpones the realization of justice and so, can retard the healing process.
- 5) An error cannot be corrected if the death penalty is carried out on an innocent person.
- 6) The death penalty is extremely expensive, due to the so-called precautions and extra measures taken to insure that only appropriate defendants receive the death penalty. Adding to the expense is the necessity for re-sentencing and retrials due to the extensive error-rate – nearly 50% of all cases in Illinois. Resources expended for the death penalty could be better used for positive programs that reduce crime and serve the victims of crime.
- 7) Reform has been tried and has not worked. In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the death penalty statutes of 40 states. The Court held that extensive jury discretion over death sentences resulted in arbitrary sentencing and therefore resulted in “cruel and unusual” punishment. However, in 1976, after various states enacted reforms that limited discretion, the Supreme Court held that the death penalty was constitutional.

Illinois’ present statute was a result of extensive reforms; and yet, the Governor’s Commission on Capital Punishment in April of 2002 identified eighty-five reforms that were needed to correct the present system. Even though in 2003 a few significant reforms passed, the vast majority of the Commission’s recommendations were not addressed. Moreover, the Governor’s Commission recognized that even if every

reform were adopted, the system would still not be error-free: *“The Commission was unanimous in the belief that no system, given human nature and frailties, could ever be devised or constructed that would work perfectly and guarantee absolutely that no innocent person is ever again sentenced to death.” Report of the Commission on Capital Punishment, Conclusion, pg. 207.*)

Background Delegates to the 2001 LWVIL Convention adopted by concurrence the LWV of Evanston’s position supporting the abolition of the death penalty.

LWVIL action

- Supported legislation to abolish the death penalty and opposed an anti-terrorism bill that contained a provision expanding the death penalty to murder committed in the course of terrorism. Local League action helped enable an abolition bill to be voted out of the House Judiciary II committee in Spring 2003.
- Wrote the Governor in Fall 2002 urging commutation of all death penalty sentences to life sentences without parole. Local Leagues participated in a postcard campaign, initiated by the Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty, directed to the Governor to ask for commutation of death sentences.
- Leagues throughout the state continued to hold programs on the death penalty.
- Was a sponsor of Death Sentence 2002 at DePaul University.
- Participated in the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty Conference in Chicago in October 2002.
- In 2003, LWVIL wrote and thanked Governor Blagojevich for extending the moratorium and urged him to support the abolition of the death penalty.
- LWVIL supported abolition legislation 2003 – 2005; responded to the General Assembly’s 2003 reform efforts stating that no reform could ensure a foolproof death penalty and that any proposed reform legislation should be applied to the entire criminal justice system; responded to the “no doubt” legislation in the Spring 2005 session, that the determination of guilt/innocence is only one of the many problems with the death penalty and does not repair the broken system.
- During 2003 and into 2004, LWVIL prepared and mailed materials to all local Leagues in the U.S. urging the adoption of a national abolition position by concurrence at the 2004 LWVUS Convention. Leagues with abolition positions and League members sympathetic to abolition were identified and enlisted in promoting the position. Although the proposal won a majority vote, it fell short of the 2/3 vote necessary for adoption. LWVIL plans to try again in 2006.

The League monitors the activities of the Capital Punishment Reform Study Committee and works in coalition with the Illinois Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITIONS: GUN CONTROL

Support for handgun and assault weapon control.

Position in Brief: The League supports legislative controls to stop the proliferation of private ownership of handguns and their irresponsible use. The League advocates restricting access to semi-automatic assault type weapons.

HANDGUN CONTROL (1976): To curb the proliferation of the private ownership of handguns and their irresponsible use, the League supports a ban on the further manufacture, sale, transportation and importation of handguns and their parts. The League supports restrictive regulation of all handguns and ammunition, enforcement of existing regulations and strict penalties for crimes committed with a handgun.

The League favors federal legislation governing the use of handguns, but will support legislation at all levels of government meeting League criteria. The League will not support state or federal legislation for specific areas only, such as metropolitan or high crime areas.

To ensure that handgun owners assume complete responsibility for their handguns, the League supports registration of the handgun itself so that it can be traced to its owner. There should be comprehensive licensing procedures, with gun safety education, fingerprinting and photographs, plus a verification of the applicant's qualifications and a permit system that restricts handgun ownership. Sufficient fees should be paid by handgun owners to cover administrative costs. Ideally, local or state governments should enforce federal standards.

The League supports handgun safety education only if it is required for owners as part of the licensing procedure, does not promote or glorify handgun usage or ownership, and is used to convey the dangers of handgun misuse and ownership.

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

ASSAULT WEAPONS CONTROL (1989): The League advocates restricting access to semi-automatic assault type weapons. These weapons present a clear and unequivocal danger to public safety. Therefore, the League believes that it is essential to restrict or prohibit the possession and sale, manufacture, importation and transportation of semi-automatic assault type weapons for private ownership. Additionally, the sale of ammunition for these weapons should be restricted or prohibited. The League favors restrictive legislation at both the state and federal levels.

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

LWVIL action The League has actively supported legislation to increase controls on handguns and restrict or prohibit access to assault weapons. LWVIL worked to support the retention of responsible state laws, such as legislation in the areas of domestic firearm violence, child safety, gun dealer regulation and assault weapon bans. LWVIL opposed concealed carry legislation and the preemption of local gun control laws. In 2004-05 on the state level, LWVIL supported legislation banning assault weapons and .50 caliber sniper rifles and ammunition; requiring those selling firearms in Illinois to be licensed; requiring mandatory trigger locks and requiring background checks on gun sales at Illinois gun shows.

LWVIL has continued to support and lobbied to protect federal initiatives, including the Brady Bill, the Assault Weapons Ban and the Assault Weapons Ban and Law Enforcement Protection Act of 2003. In 2004-05, on the federal level, LWVIL supported renewal of the Assault Weapons Ban and opposed the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, or the so-called Immunity Bill that proposed special immunity from liability to gun dealers and manufacturers who, through negligence, provide guns to criminals.

League had an active presence at the Chicago Million Mom March in the summer of 2000. LWVIL was represented at the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence (ICHV) Midwest Action Conference and cosponsored the ICHV Rally Against Handgun Violence in 2004.

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: SCHOOLS

Support for a public school system that is equitable both in quality for the student and financing for the taxpayer.

Position in Brief: The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports a system of high quality elementary and secondary schools for all children in Illinois which provides for local control of school program and budget within minimum program requirements set by the State. The State should provide leadership to local communities for program development and should set standards for recognition and accreditation of schools. The effectiveness of educational programs should be evaluated regularly. The League favors minimum standards for graduation and promotion of students. The League supports increased professionalism for teachers including stringent teacher preparation standards, comprehensive teacher and principal evaluations, changes in tenure and increased teacher compensation. The State should assume the major responsibility for funding public schools and guarantee an adequate level of financial support. League believes that charters should be established by local school boards and that the Illinois State Board of Education should continue to monitor the progress of existing charters before supporting further expansion.

SCHOOL QUALITY (1986 and 1987)

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

Primary Purpose of Schooling The League believes the primary purpose of schooling is the transmission of knowledge and culture through which children learn in areas necessary to their continuing development. Such areas should include the language arts, mathematics, biological and physical science, social sciences, the fine arts, physical development and health. Emphasis should be placed on the development of critical thinking skills and the integration of knowledge. Each school district shall give priority in the allocation of resources to fulfilling the primary purpose of schooling.

State Program Mandates The League supports the following instructional mandates: language arts, mathematics, science, social studies/history, foreign language, art and music, vocational education, special education, gifted education, early childhood education and health education. There should be flexibility in implementing mandates at the local level.

Mandates such as metric measurement, career education, safety education and consumer education should be integrated into other programs rather than existing as separate mandates. Driver education and physical education, especially at the high school level, should continue but with more local options permitted. The League supports bilingual programs to enable non-English-speaking children to learn English as quickly as possible, but programs must be flexible.

Local school districts should be required to provide the following services: media programs, school food services, pupil personnel services, student health programs, necessary transportation services and special services to disadvantaged children.

The League supports state requirements for compulsory attendance and minimum standards for length of school day and school year. The League opposes any additional state-mandated school holidays.

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

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

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

Personnel Issues The League supports stringent entrance requirements into a four-year undergraduate program for students who intend to teach. Such students should pursue an undergraduate course of study that primarily emphasizes the liberal arts and sciences and allows for early and varied teaching experiences. Certification should be granted after the student obtains a liberal arts and sciences degree, completes a successful period of internship and passes an objective test to ensure competency in basic skills and subject matter to be taught.

The League supports a comprehensive evaluation process for both teachers and principals. Teachers should be evaluated by administrators (principals, department chair or other administrators) and other teachers, all of whom should receive training in teacher evaluations. A comprehensive evaluation should be based on the following criteria: attendance, classroom management skills, instructional methods, knowledge of subject matter, continuing professional education and interpersonal skills. Evaluations of principals should be done by administrators and teachers who are trained to evaluate. The evaluation should be based on the following criteria: ability to maintain productive

parent-school relationships, organizational skills, ability to establish and preserve a positive school climate, instructional leadership, ability to objectively evaluate personnel and their teaching skills, continuing professional education and interpersonal skills.

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

To ensure that the teaching profession attracts and retains highly qualified teachers, the League supports the following: an increase in beginning teachers' salaries financed either by the State directly or through grants to local districts to use at their discretion for increased salaries, an increase in the role of teachers in instructional leadership and management decisions, the establishment of a career ladder for teachers which includes increased salaries for increased teacher responsibilities and an increase in salary for teachers who take advanced courses or obtain advanced degrees.

SCHOOL FINANCE (1975, 1977, 1979, revised 1993): The League believes that schools should be provided stable, reliable and adequate revenue through a combination of federal, state and local sources. State funding levels should be sufficient to enable districts to provide for all students an education that meets both standards established by the State Board of Education and legislated mandates. The League opposes additional mandates without state funding provisions. The State should not subsidize districts too small to meet state standards but rather should encourage consolidation through financial incentives. State standards for education should also address the importance of adequately maintaining and building school facilities.

General state aid to schools should be reviewed regularly, taking into account increases in the cost of living, professional estimates of the cost of quality educational programs, and regional differences in the costs of providing the same or similar services. The League strongly supports using a weighting factor for low-income students, believing that basic funding for disadvantaged students should reflect their need for additional services. Local districts should be held accountable by the State for the expenditure of money for programs that fill special student needs.

The distribution of state funds to public elementary and secondary schools should reduce financial disparities between districts and increase equity for students and for taxpayers. The State should concentrate its efforts on raising the level of the financial resources of poorer districts. Capping of allowable expenditure per pupil should not be used as a means to achieve equity. A reasonable minimum local tax effort, achievable without referendum, should be required for a district to receive equalization aid.

The League strongly supports reduced reliance on local property taxes to fund schools and believes that the State should assume the major responsibility for funding public education. The League opposes proposals that would provide public funds for private schools. The income tax (preferably at a graduated rate) provides the most productive and equitable source of revenue for schools. The League opposes state assumption of the total cost of public education because it could diminish local control and educational innovation.

CHARTER SCHOOLS (2001): The League of Women Voters of Illinois believes that the Illinois State Board of Education should continue to monitor the progress of existing charters before supporting expansion, specifically looking for improvement in individual student test scores and achievement of the specific goals stated in the school's charter. League also believes that charters should be established by local school boards, with adequate provisions for public education and participation in the decision making process. An appeal process to the State Board of Education should remain in place as an option for charters who have been denied by their local school boards. While we feel that advantages of charters largely outweigh the disadvantages, we have identified the following areas of concern:

- 1) School funding. Charters do nothing to address the issue of equitable and adequate funding of education, including special education.
- 2) Financial impact on underlying school districts, especially smaller districts. Charters place financial pressure on smaller districts by drawing money out of the traditional public schools.
- 3) Privatization and profit-making. The LWVIL opposes the presence of private, for-profit companies in the governance of public education, as there could be a conflict between the interests of shareholders in the corporation and the citizens of the state.

LWVIL has also identified areas of opportunity resulting from charter schools:

- 1) Innovation. Charters have a mandate to share innovations in teaching methods, curricula and standards of assessment for all stakeholders.
- 2) Increased parental choice and involvement within the public school system.

Background and Action League support for equal educational opportunity is a national position that is now embodied in League principles. Because education is a responsibility of the states, however, LWVIL and many other state Leagues have adopted positions on the equitable distribution of state resources for public schools.

In 1973, a comprehensive new study that examined more equitable ways to raise money and distribute it for schools was authorized. The position adopted in 1975 supported the concept of the resource equalizer formula.

During the 1983-85 biennium, League efforts were directed towards re-educating members about school finance so that they could serve as community resource people, marshaling citizen input into the school reform movement of 1985. During this effort, the League realized that it was necessary to broaden the position to include other aspects of education in addition to funding. A study of the role of the state in determining educational policy was adopted by the 1985 LWVIL Convention. Action during this biennium emphasized full funding of mandated programs and development of a school funding system that was equitable and adequate for all schools in Illinois.

The League concentrated its efforts during 1985-89 on ensuring that education was given the financial resources to implement the 1985 education reforms. In 1985, the League worked for passage of an increased cigarette tax when it became obvious that there was no hope of passing an increase in the income tax. In 1987-89, the League concentrated its efforts on convincing the General Assembly that an income tax increase

was necessary if the education reforms (particularly for high-risk pre-schoolers) and formula revisions were to be funded.

In 1990, the League joined the Coalition for Educational Rights in support of a lawsuit against the State challenging the constitutionality of Illinois' school funding system. LWVIL would work for school funding largely through its participation in the Coalition, which it chaired from December 1994 to June 1996, until the Coalition's dissolution in late 1997.

In the 1991-93 biennium, through an action campaign adopted at the 1991 LWVIL Convention, local Leagues began to promote public understanding of school finance issues and the need for school funding reform. During the same period, LWVIL monitored and provided testimony to the Legislative Task Force on School Finance. The League also actively supported an amendment to the educational article of the Illinois Constitution, passed by the legislature in May 1992, which was intended to strengthen the constitutional requirement for an adequate and equitable state school funding system. The amendment fell just short of passage in November 1992. In spring of 1993, the League supported unsuccessful legislation that embodied the recommendations of the Legislative Task Force.

Recognizing that long-term solutions for school funding and other human service needs require reform of the State's tax system, the League embarked in 1993 on a tax reform action focus centered around a campaign for a graduated income tax (see State Fiscal Policies position, pg. 37). The 1995 LWVIL Convention approved the formation of a Working Committee on State Tax and School Funding Reform to direct the League's efforts in these areas.

The League provided testimony in early 1996 to the Governor's Commission on Education Funding. LWVIL, with its education coalition partners, supported legislation stemming from the Commission's recommendations. These recommendations, including an increase in the personal income tax, failed in both the 1996 and 1997 spring sessions.

After unsuccessful lobbying for an increase in the income tax as a preferable source of revenue, the League did not take a position on a bill passed in December of 1997, which provided an additional \$485 million for education through a tax increase on cigarettes, telephone calls and riverboat gambling.

During the 1999 session, several tuition tax credit bills were introduced. The Educational Expenses Tax Reform Act, providing for an annual state income tax credit for "qualified educational expenses" exceeding \$250 up to a maximum credit of \$500, passed the General Assembly and was signed by the Governor. League believes that this threshold is unlikely to be met by the vast majority of parents of public school children; therefore, LWVIL considered this legislation as a benefit to parents of private school children and opposed it.

During the 2000 Session, the General Assembly attempted to pass the Illinois budget with a provision to provide for payments of public funds to nonpublic schools. The initiative was not included in the final budget after an intense lobby effort by the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Illinois Education Association and League members.

Delegates at the 1999 LWVIL Convention adopted a study of charter schools. Beginning in August of 1999, a study committee of 20 produced two packets of background data/information and a consensus packet. Their investigation focused on the advantages and disadvantages of charters, current and potential funding sources, the impact of charters on local school districts and the educational implementation of charters. The committee did significant outreach to educational stakeholders. Representatives of the Illinois PTA, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Illinois Association of School Boards and the Chicago Public Schools attended meetings, both as participants and resources. Local league study chairs disseminated study information to their members through their bulletins and informational meetings; many organized community forums on the issue. The LWVIL Board approved the Charter School position in April 2001.

In 2001, LWVIL joined Network 21 (now A+ Illinois), a coalition of education, business, labor and civic organizations that share a common interest in reforming Illinois' school finance system. Membership in the coalition continues to provide the League with opportunities to learn more about school funding issues and pending legislation, and allows the League to bring its positions to the discussions. League members also attend meetings of other organizations and coalitions which are working to improve school funding.

LWVIL attended meetings of the Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) which was appointed by the General Assembly to study school funding problems and make recommendations to the General Assembly. LWVIL filed comments in support of the EFAB recommendations.

In 2001-2003, LWVIL and its members took action by meeting with legislators about school funding, calling and writing legislators during the legislative session, writing letters to the editors, and participating in media events. Leagues in Lake Forest/Lake Bluff, Park Forest Area and McDonough County held meetings to educate the public about school funding issues and problems. Other Leagues studied and took action on local school referenda.

At the 2003 LWVIL Convention, Leagues voted to adopt an action focus on State Fiscal Policy and School Funding for the 2003-2005 biennium. Fiscal policy and school funding are issues which are closely connected because education is a large portion of the state budget. Other League positions are also impacted because the State has insufficient revenues to provide for many of the needs that the League has identified.

The 2004 LWVIL Annual Legislative Briefing highlighted these issues with speakers Ralph Martire, from the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, and Dr. Robert Schiller, then Superintendent of the State Board of Education. Many of the local Leagues held meetings on these issues for their members and the public.

The LWVIL worked with two coalitions, A+ Illinois and Better Funding for Better Schools, to encourage the Governor and the General Assembly to change the way the state raises revenues and to spend more money on public schools. The coalitions promoted HB/SB 750 as the way to effect this change. HB/SB 750 as drafted would increase the income tax, broaden the sales tax to include more services, and provide property tax relief. League members also attended a rally in the Capitol on May 18, 2005 to support school funding reform.

League members attended the League Lobby Days in Springfield in both 2004 and 2005 and met with their legislators to encourage them to support HB/SB 750. Local Leagues met with their legislators in their district offices to promote this legislation, and made phone calls, wrote letters and e-mails to let their legislators and Governor know their views. Members testified at House Budget Hearings across the state in support of the concepts included in HB/SB 750. Local Leagues held forums to educate themselves and the public on the proposed legislation. HB/SB 750 were not called for a vote.

(See also State Fiscal Policies, pg. 37).

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: STATE ELECTION LAWS

Support for improved election laws and procedures applied uniformly throughout the state and opposition to term limits for members of the Illinois General Assembly.

Position In Brief: The League supports uniform election laws and procedures throughout the state to ensure the integrity of the election systems and opposes term limits for members of the General Assembly. The League believes that a good election system should provide stability and continuity of governance and should produce a legislature that addresses the problems of society effectively. It should be resistant to both outright fraud and other forms of political manipulation.

REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS (1972 - 1977, revised 1999): The League of Women Voters supports uniformity of election laws and procedures throughout the state. Registration and voting methods should ensure the integrity of the election system, maximize voters' unencumbered access to the ballot, preserve the secrecy of the ballot and ensure accurate and timely vote tabulation. Citizens should have the right to file complaints and writs of mandamus to force compliance with election laws.

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

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

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

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS (1971, revised 1999): The League of Women Voters supports a state board of elections. Such agency should ensure that election laws be applied uniformly and properly throughout the state. The state board of elections should supervise and coordinate: voter registration; candidate filing, reporting, and certification; and the nomination and the election processes.

Organization Members of the state board of elections should be appointed to staggered terms by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. No political

party should constitute a majority of the board and the board's size should ensure that all parts of the state are represented. A means for resolving tie votes should be utilized. The League is not opposed to compensation beyond expenses, reflecting the scope of the job.

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

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

TERM LIMITS (1992, 1999): The League opposes constitutional or statutory term limitations for members of the General Assembly based on the League's support for accountability, representativeness, and effective performance and for a dynamic balance of power between the legislative and the executive branches (see LWVUS Congress and The Presidency position, pg. 6).

ELECTION SYSTEMS CRITERIA (2002):

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

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

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

- Encourage close links between legislators and their constituents so as to promote citizen participation in government and help to assure accountability.
- Be easy to use and to administer. Citizens should be able to cast their votes with ease and to understand the election results without difficulty. Complicated voting procedures that discourage voter participation and create confusion over voting results should be avoided. Consideration should be given to the administrative costs of conducting elections.
- Produce a legislature that fairly and accurately reflects the views found among the public, enabling voters to be confident that their voices will be heard.
- Encourage high-quality political campaigns by instituting procedures that promote discussion of issues and discourage mudslinging and dirty tricks.
- Encourage high voter turnout, recognizing that while administrative matters, such as barriers to registration, can affect turnout, the election system itself can also influence it.

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

- permanent registration,
- a shorter ballot,
- reduced residency requirements,
- creation of the appointed State Board of Elections (SBE),
- consolidation of elections,
- extension of voting hours to 7 p.m.,
- liberalization of the deputy registrar law and,
- at the national level, lowering of the voting age.

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

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

The League has supported legislation to make absentee and in-person voting more accessible to disabled citizens and to broaden in-person absentee voting opportunities for all citizens. The LWVIL continues to work for a later primary, expansion of voter registration opportunities and the codification of election laws.

Computerized Voter Registration List The League has been on record as favoring the creation of a computerized statewide voter registration system since the early 1980's. The League has presented support statements to the State Board of Elections (SBE) several times. In 1998, the SBE formed a study group to develop conceptual design recommendations for a voter registration computer network. The League's election laws specialist was a member of the study group. The group's report was submitted to the SBE in September 1998, but creation of a computerized voter registration system was delayed due to resistance by local election authorities. There was minimal effort to implement the study group's recommendations until 2001 when SBE hired a consulting firm to design a computerized voter registration system. Work on the system was proceeding well until the fall of 2002 when the State faced a budget crisis and FY03 funding for the voter registration project was cut to the FY02 level. LWVIL lobbied unsuccessfully for restoration of the funds. In October 2002, when the money ran out, work on the project stopped. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) passed by Congress in October 2002, included funds to assist states with the establishment of a voter registration database. Illinois has received some "early money" under this proviso enabling the SBE to bring the consultants back to complete the Illinois Data Export Application/Uniform Data Form (IDEA/UDF) project. The goal to have the system in place for the March 2004 primary election was not met.

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) NVRA, often called Motor Voter, was a national priority throughout the '90's. After NVRA was signed into law in 1993, the action

moved to the states. LWWIL and other supporters were unsuccessful in obtaining passage of NVRA implementing legislation in the Illinois General Assembly. When NVRA became effective on January 1, 1995, Illinois was not in compliance.

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

In November 1995, the League filed a second lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the two-tier voter registration system. The League's position prevailed in both the circuit court and the Illinois Appellate Court. In October 1996, the State dropped its legal challenge. NVRA is being implemented under rules and regulations created by the State Board of Elections. The League remains committed to having NVRA's requirements incorporated into the Illinois Election Code.

As Illinois attempted to meet the federal requirements of NVRA a number of problems arose. In response to problems in the drivers license facilities, the Secretary of State convened an advisory committee in 1999. The committee was asked to evaluate the existing implementation of the federal Motor Voter Law (NVRA) in Illinois and to recommend administrative improvements. The LWWIL election laws issue specialist served on the advisory committee. The committee's report was issued in November 2000. Several of the committee's recommendations were implemented in 2001. The Secretary of State's staff continues to make changes in its administrative procedures based on the report. Monitoring NVRA implementation remains a League priority.

Legislative Process Three Readings Rule In the spring of 1998, the League joined, as an *amicus*, in a case before the Illinois Court of Appeals. Our brief supported the plaintiffs-appellants' contention that the passage of PA 89-700 violated the three-readings rule (prior to passage legislation must be "read" - presented and/or debated by each chamber of the legislature - three separate times). The legislation banned straight-ticket voting in Illinois. The League's brief addressed only the legislative process, not the merits of the legislation. The Appeals Court accepted the brief; the Illinois Supreme Court denied it. Both courts upheld the lower court ruling. Thus, Illinois no longer has straight-ticket voting.

Term Limits The LWWUS Board announced in 1991 that the League opposes term limits for members of the U.S. Congress. Delegates to the LWWUS 1992 Convention approved a motion allowing state and local Leagues to take action against term limits for state and local legislative offices based on the national position. The LWWIL Board approved extending the position to the Illinois General Assembly. Delegates to the 1993 LWWIL Convention concurred. In the fall of 1994, the League was prepared to oppose a proposed constitutional amendment to limit the terms of state legislators to eight years. The question was not placed on the ballot because the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the petition calling for the referendum was unconstitutional.

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

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

Election Systems The 1997 LWWIL Convention adopted a Will of the Convention that directed a review of the State Election Laws positions, including consideration of proportional representation. The review committee concluded that proportional representation was too much to study in addition to the position review, and recommended the creation of a separate proportional representation task force. Volunteers for the task force were insufficient. Delegates at the 1999 LWWIL Convention adopted the revised state election laws position.

Delegates at the 1999 LWWIL Convention adopted a study of cumulative voting for the Illinois House contingent upon the League's receiving funding from an appropriate foundation source. The League received a grant from the Joyce Foundation in the summer of 2000. The League's state committee began its study of Election Systems in the fall. In order to meet the grant's requirements the study was expanded to include an examination of other methods for electing representatives besides cumulative voting.

In a caucus meeting at the 2001 LWWIL Convention, members of the state committee presented information and a progress report to convention delegates. The study was readopted by the convention. As a means for reaching member agreement, League members used a mail-in form to identify and rank criteria important for a good election system. Responses were received from members in 42 local Leagues and two members at-large. In January 2002, the state board reported the results and issued a position statement. The position is written in broad terms that will allow the League flexibility in evaluating any proposed electoral system.

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

Election Administration Reform In February 2001, at the LWWIL Annual Legislative Briefing League members were given an overview of Illinois' decentralized election administration. During discussion members agreed that the League should undertake a deeper examination of Illinois' election administration. The Election Administration

Reform (EAR) Committee was formed under the League's Making Democracy Work Action Focus. (see page 5).

The committee has undertaken a number of activities in its efforts to identify needed changes in election administration. During the 2001-03 biennium, the committee conducted a survey of Illinois' 110 election authorities asking questions about election practices in their jurisdictions. The committee reviewed the results of the survey and selected several areas for more research. The committee agreed to explore further the recruitment of election judges, voters' rights, and access for voters. During the 2002 veto session, the committee led an unsuccessful effort in support of the State Board of Elections' request for supplemental funding for election judges and for monies to complete the statewide voter registration database project. The committee, in cooperation with the American Bar Association, arranged for the printing of Voter Rights palm cards that were made available to local Leagues for use in their communities.

Based on findings from the survey of election authorities, the League sent letters to a number of election authorities urging them to take steps to ensure that all eligible voters in their jurisdictions, including detainees awaiting trial, are given the opportunity to vote. In 2005, the General Assembly passed League supported legislation that permits detainees to vote absentee. This legislation should ensure that detainees wishing to vote are given that opportunity in all election jurisdictions.

In order to become better informed about how the electoral process is handled in the polling place, Leagues were asked to secure poll watcher credentials for their members and send them to observe voting practices during the 2002 primary election. The League and some of our coalition members were denied credentials in some election jurisdictions. In 2005, due to League efforts a bill was introduced that permits civic organizations, such as the League, to serve as poll watchers. The bill did not get out of committee before the session adjourned; however, the League will continue to seek passage of this legislation.

The federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), passed in 2002, requires that voters be allowed to vote a provisional ballot under certain circumstances. The EAR committee prepared an informational memo describing provisional voting that was distributed to local Leagues. Reports from the State Board of Elections revealed that there was a lack of uniformity among the 110 election authorities concerning the use of provisional ballots in the 2004 primary and general elections. The League will promote efforts to achieve statewide uniformity in the use of provisional ballots.

The voter satisfaction survey posted on the LWVIL website showed that voters have concerns about polling place access, citizens' voting rights, training of election judges, and have questions about absentee and provisional ballots. This response from voters reinforces the EAR committee's decision to continue its work. With the re-adoption of the action focus for 2005-07, the EAR committee will continue to monitor HAVA implementation, to pursue its goals to increase voter education, reduce barriers to the electoral process and improve election procedures based on its findings. The Illinois General Assembly passed several election bills in the 2005 spring session. The EAR committee expects to devote time to the examination of these laws and their effect on the administration of elections.

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: STATE FISCAL POLICIES

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

STATE FISCAL POLICY (1977, 1980, 1981, modified 1987, revised 1994): The LWVIL supports a diversified revenue system which principally relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees, is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive and simple.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A comprehensive study of the revenue system began in 1980. The state board determined that the local League participation (less than 60%) in the consensus process was not an adequate basis for developing a state position. However, there was substantial agreement among the participating Leagues and the state board recommended to the 1981 LWVIL Convention that individual Leagues concur with the position statement. The convention adopted the recommendation, and concurrence was reached in the fall of 1981. In 1993, the state board appointed a committee to review the LWVIL Fiscal Policy position. The 1994 Interim Council approved a revised position.

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

The League had supported a graduated income tax at the time of the 1970 Constitutional Convention. A political compromise, however, resulted in the approval of a flat rate income tax that was perceived at that time to be a fairer tax than it is today. Since then, the League has worked steadily to improve the progressivity of the flat rate tax by urging an increase in the personal exemption (see LWVIL Constitutional Implementation and Amendments position, pg. 10).

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

The 1995 LWVIL Convention approved the formation of a Working Committee on State Tax and School Funding Reform, reflecting a strong commitment to continued League activity in these areas and the recognition that long-term solutions for school funding will require reform of the state's tax system.

LWVIL action A number of League positions have been enacted into law. In 1979, legislation was enacted to require training in assessment practices and procedures for township assessors and to establish multi-township assessment districts with a minimum population of 1,000 by January 1981. Property tax bills are now required to contain more information, and citizen awareness of the appeals process has resulted in many more challenges to inequitable assessments.

During 1982-83, the State's ability to adequately fund services was eroded by recession, federal funding decreases and tax relief legislation. The League worked to increase awareness of the State's financial dilemma and to increase the state income tax. In 1983, a temporary 18-month increase in the income tax was enacted. Attempts to secure a permanent increase were futile. The League therefore supported a 5percent tax on interstate telecommunications and an increase in the cigarette tax to fund education in 1985.

In 1986, the financial condition of the State of Illinois became substantially worse. Increases in public aid grants were again vetoed, and the 1985 Education Reforms were not adequately funded.

From 1986 - 1997, one of the League's top priorities was support for an increase in the state income tax in order to provide adequate funding for education and human services. The League formed CARE for Illinois, a coalition of over 100 organizations, which achieved partial success with the 1989 temporary income tax surcharge that was made permanent in two stages in 1991 and 1993.

The League continues to support increasing the amount of the personal exemption to reduce the burden on low-income families. LWVIL supported a sunset measure passed in 1994 for newly created exemptions, credits and deductions. The League has continued to oppose additional income tax exemptions and deductions that would further erode state revenue. The League opposed legislation enacted in 1991 to cap local property taxes for the collar counties and similar legislation enacted in 1995 for Cook County.

In the spring of 1991, the League began to promote discussion of a constitutional amendment for a graduated income tax as the best long-term solution to the State's persistent financial problems. These discussions led to the formation in 1993 of Progress Illinois, a statewide coalition of organizations chaired by the League, to spearhead a campaign to place a constitutional amendment for a graduated income tax on the November 1994 ballot. LWVIL and local Leagues mounted an extensive public education and lobbying campaign to generate support for a graduated income tax amendment. Although resolutions proposing a constitutional amendment were introduced in both houses of the General Assembly in the Spring 1993 legislative session, election year politics prevented the amendment from being called for a vote.

The League continued to work for progressive tax reform both in the context of its school funding efforts and in its work with Progress Illinois. As part of its public education and advocacy effort, the coalition commissioned two significant research projects from the University of Illinois Institute of Government and Public Affairs: (1) an analysis of Illinois' structural revenue deficit and (2) the development of computer models of Illinois' individual income and general sales taxes to analyze the impact of major tax reform proposals on the burden on taxpayers at different income levels and on revenue growth. Lawmakers, legislative staffs and others who analyze and evaluate both existing tax policies and a number of revenue proposals have used the models.

During the school funding debate in the spring 1997 legislative session, the League supported the Governor's failed call for an increase in the income tax and worked unsuccessfully to insert an increase in the personal exemption in the revenue package (see LWVIL Schools position, pg. 24). At the end of the spring 1998 legislative session, the General Assembly enacted a small, phased-in increase of the personal exemption.

The League opposed legislation passed in 1998 that allows income from multi-state corporations to be apportioned to Illinois by the sales factor. This narrowed the corporate tax base, at a time when the State has no long-term school funding solutions.

In June 2000, League spoke against the six-month suspension of the Illinois gas tax, stating that the projected two percent across the board reduction in state budgets would adversely affect Illinois social services.

In 2001, LWWUS and LWWIL joined the "First Things First" coalition in advocating that the federal government put "first things first" and spend revenues on necessary government programs that the League supports, rather than tax cuts. League testified at a rally on April 11, 2002 and participated in a grassroots lobbying effort opposing the tax cut.

The League advocated for progressive tax reform in the context of the school funding debate throughout the 1990's and in 2000-2005. Opportunities to advance progressive tax reform initiatives appear to be tied to school funding reform. The League continued to work with Network 21 (now A+ Illinois) and the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability to ensure that tax, fiscal and spending policies are fair and promote economic growth.

At the 2003 LWWIL Convention, Leagues voted to adopt an action focus on State Fiscal Policy and School Funding for the 2003-2005 biennium. Fiscal policy and school funding issues are closely connected because education is a large portion of the state budget. Other League positions are also impacted because the State has insufficient revenues to provide for many of the needs that the League has identified.

During the 2003-2005 biennium, LWWIL and local Leagues attended LWWIL Annual Legislative Briefings, Lobby Days, and meetings with legislators. Leagues held public forums to educate League members, legislators, and the public on school funding and fiscal policy issues. League members attended rallies in Springfield, wrote letters and e-mails to legislators and made phone calls to urge the governor and legislators to pass HB/SB 750. HB/SB 750 would increase state spending on schools and would increase state revenues by raising the income tax, broadening the sales tax, and providing some property tax relief. HB/SB 750 were not called for a vote.

(See also, LWWIL Schools position, pg. 24)

LWVIL GOVERNMENT POSITION: STATE REDISTRICTING

Support for a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

STATE REDISTRICTING (1993): The League supports a redistricting process which is timely and orderly and which includes a formal announced timetable, makes information and related data available to all who wish to participate in the process, offers ample opportunities for expert testimony and public reaction to the proposed maps, encourages compromise among partisan representatives, avoids a partisan stalemate, and results in maps which offer the voters a choice of candidates for election.

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

- 1) Population equity: The average deviation among all districts in each house shall not exceed a range of 1percent, with no more than a 5 percent variance between the most populated and the least populated districts. Districts shall be based on current census statistics.
- 2) All districts shall be drawn in compliance with the United States Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments.
- 3) Compact and contiguous: All districts shall be compact, with the smallest perimeter possible, and contiguous, adjacent to one another with more than a single point of contiguity. Areas connected only at points of adjoining corners are not contiguous.
- 4) Boundaries:
 - a) The number of counties, towns and cities divided among more than one district shall be as small as possible.
 - b) Districts shall follow existing political boundaries (i.e., county, municipal, ward lines), as far as possible.
 - c) No city block shall be subdivided, since a city block is the smallest parcel for which census data are available.
 - d) Where possible, district lines shall follow permanent and easily recognized features, such as toll ways, expressways, highways, streets, rivers, and clear geographical features, and when practical, shall coincide with census tract boundaries.
- 5) No district shall be drawn with the intent to favor a political party or incumbent legislator or congressman.

- 6) Each state senatorial district shall consist of two entire house districts as currently stipulated in the state constitution. Ideally each state senatorial district shall be entirely within a single U.S. Congressional district.

These criteria may be applied to any redistricting process.

Background Prior to the adoption of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, LWVIL developed a position relating to apportionment that included a preferred method for redistricting legislative districts after each decennial census. Article IV, Section 3 of the 1970 Constitution details procedures to be followed in legislative redistricting. Four redistrictings have taken place using these rules. In 1981, 1991, and 2001, because there was no agreement on the proposed maps in either the legislature or the Legislative Redistricting Commission, it was necessary to select a tiebreaker member for the Legislative Redistricting Commission. The selected maps reflected the partisanship of the tiebreaker member's vote. Suits were filed each time and the new legislative districts were determined based on court rulings.

In 1992, LWVIL created a Redistricting Task Force to develop a position for local Leagues' concurrence. Delegates to the 1993 LWVIL Convention adopted the position on State Redistricting.

LWVIL action In 1992, Illinois' Secretary of State created a Bipartisan Review Commission to consider reforms in Illinois' Procedures for Re-mapping Legislative Districts. With the adoption of its State Redistricting position, the League was prepared to comment on this commission's recommendations.

The Review Commission was reconvened in 1998 and submitted its report to the governor early in 1999. The commission recommended changes that required a constitutional amendment. A Senate Joint Resolution, calling for submitting a proposed constitutional amendment to the voters, was introduced in May 1999. The amendment to Articles IV and XIV would have changed the way in which the State redistricts the Illinois House and Senate. If passed by both houses, the proposition would have been voted on in November 2000. If approved by the voters, it would have taken effect beginning with redistricting in 2001. The League was represented on the commission. Since the General Assembly never adopted the resolution, there was no opportunity to vote on the new redistricting process. In response to requests from legislative staff, the League submitted a copy of League's redistricting position to both the House and Senate Redistricting Committees. Redistricting statements were made to legislative committees, which held hearings around the state.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States and Major Action by Illinois League under the LWVUS Positions

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 (1983): Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

MILITARY POLICY AND DEFENSE SPENDING (1984, revised 1886): Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

TRADE (1973, updated 2002): Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

UNITED NATIONS (1977, updated 2002): Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (1986): Promote U.S. policies that meet long term social and economic needs of the developing countries.

LWVIL action Illinois local Leagues participated in both the Trade and U.N. position updates (2000 – 2002). Local Leagues educated their members and the public on international relation issues by holding seminars and lectures and participating on Great Decision discussions. In 2003, state and local Leagues across America urged the U.S. President to work with the United Nations to resolve the situation with Iraq. LWVIL also urged U.S. Senators to ratify the U.N. Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 2004, the League supported and the Illinois General Assembly passed a resolution urging U.S. Senate action on ratification of the U.N. CEDAW.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Position and Major Action by Illinois Leagues under the LWVUS Positions

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.

(positions reached 1958 - 1986)

AGRICULTURE POLICY (1988): 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.

LWVIL action No recent action.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND POLLUTION CONTROL: Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with the maximum protection of public health and the environment.

LWVIL action

Air Quality LWVIL continues to monitor state implementation of the 1990 Clean Air Act and particularly supports efforts to control acid rain damage in a manner that preserves the environmentally sound use of Illinois coal. As the seriousness of global warming became more evident, the League, in 2000, began monitoring clean air legislation. In 2001, the League lobbied for legislation strengthening Illinois' resolve to limit the quantities of emissions from fossil fuel-fired electric generating plants, the single largest industrial air pollution source in the Midwest.

In 2002, Illinois faced the possibility of increased air pollution and health risks due to the federal government's attempt to weaken or delay implementation of a key provision of the Federal Clean Air Act, the New Source Review program. This provision protects Americans from increases in pollution by establishing pollution reduction requirements for aging coal-burning power plants and other major pollution sources. Since 2003, LWVIL has supported state legislation that establishes state clean air rules to replace the federal rollbacks on the New Source Review provisions of the Clean Air Act. In 2005, the LWVIL expressed their appreciation in a letter to United States Senator Barack Obama for his opposition to the Administration's "Clear Skies" legislative initiative, a plan that would weaken or delay the implementation of the Clean Air Act.

Indoor air quality also was addressed by the LWVIL in 2005. League members lobbied successfully in support of legislation that would allow local communities to regulate smoking in public places.

Energy The Illinois League participated in a utilities reform task force in preparation for renewal of the State's Public Utility Act, has lobbied for energy conservation measures and for aid to low-income energy consumers, and has been an annual participant in the Illinois Energy Conference.

Land Use (see LWVIL Land Use position, pg. 47).

Water Resources The Illinois League supported efforts to develop a comprehensive groundwater protection plan for Illinois based on a policy of non-degradation and continues to work for stronger legislation to protect groundwater quality. Over the past decade, the League has participated in the Illinois Wetlands Advisory Committee, the Clean Water Dialogue Group, the Citizens Advisory Group on Waukegan Harbor and the Chicago Shoreline Protection Commission.

Local Leagues have sponsored educational forums and successfully waged groundwater protection and water quality campaigns. To recognize the efforts of members of local Leagues on behalf of the environment and especially the efforts promoting conservation and protection of clean water throughout the state, the LWVIL in 1997 received the "Making Waves Award."

Since 2001, when "isolated wetlands" within states lost federal protection, LWVIL has supported efforts that have been made to enact legislation protecting Illinois' wetlands. Since opposition to wetland protection has been great, passage of legislation protecting Illinois' wetlands has not been successful. However, the League and other groups were successful during the Spring 2005 legislative session in defeating a bill that would have weakened existing wetlands up to 0.5 acre without any mitigation for the loss.

Waste Management Source reduction, waste reduction and recycling measures have been a high priority. LWVIL has supported restrictions on packaging, recycling initiatives, planning mandates, the local review process for siting of landfills or incinerators, stronger state regulation of hazardous waste and low-level radioactive waste, pollution prevention initiatives and funding for cleanup of hazardous waste sites. A League member served on the state Task Force for the Development of Recycled Markets. Many local Leagues have been active in expanding recycling mandates and organizing waste reduction and recycling projects in their communities. Several local Leagues have co-sponsored IEPA household hazardous waste pick-up days.

The LWVIL Solid Waste Legislation Committee researched and wrote two bills on household hazardous waste (HHW) which were introduced into the Illinois General Assembly in April 1991. One bill required counties to plan a separate collection of HHW and the other banned HHW from landfills after 1996. Recognizing that an increasing deficit in state revenues would thwart passage of either bill, the committee worked to amend a bill which required the IEPA to plan to collect HHW from households and to distribute public information on HHW. The bill was signed into law in September of 1992.

In 1995, LWVIL co-sponsored with the IEPA six community outreach workshops throughout the state designed to inform plant managers, environmental managers and public relations managers on ways to conduct meaningful and effective community outreach programs. Members from six local Leagues participated in each of the meetings.

In support of the “reduce, reuse, recycle” components of the waste management hierarchy, as well as maximum protection of public health and the environment, the League lobbied successfully for the repeal of the Retail Rate Law of 1987 which subsidized incinerators during the 1995 – 96 legislative session.

The League was part of a statewide outreach panel organized in 1995 by the Chemical Industry Council of Illinois (CICI) to address environmental, health, and safety issues related to chemical manufacturing in Illinois and to help shape a dialogue between the industry and the public. The panel is part of the Responsible Care Initiative launched in 1988 by the Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA).

The LWVIL welcomed the creation of a new House Committee – the Environmental Health Committee – during the 2005 legislative session. The League worked successfully with other groups to pass legislation considered by this committee that would ban a class of toxic chemicals commonly used as flame retardants in consumer products in favor of safer alternatives. These chemicals, commonly known as PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), are rapidly accumulating in our bodies, homes, and in the fish and sediment of Lake Michigan. The League also supported legislation strengthening Illinois EPA’s enforcement authority when dealing with hazardous releases into the soil and groundwater. Protection of public health and the environment as well as promotion of public participation was increased with the successful passage of this legislation.

Nuclear Issues In 1990-91, the League served as grant administrator for a fund established by the Illinois and Kentucky Compact Commission to enable citizens to participate fully in the public hearing process on the siting of an Illinois low-level radioactive waste facility. In 1996, the League reviewed applications from Illinois nonprofit groups for technical assistance grant funds made available by the Central Midwest Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact Commission. These grants allowed the groups to hire technical advisors for the understanding of the criteria and technical issues as well as presenting testimony to the Illinois Low-Level Radioactive Waste Task Group. The issue is still unresolved, as an Illinois site has not yet been selected. The League, along with coalition partners, spoke at a press conference in 2002 asking U.S. Senators to vote against a national high-level waste repository at Yucca Mountain.

NATURAL RESOURCES: Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

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

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

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION: LAND USE

Support for a state land use policy that addresses the problem of conflicting uses for the land resources of Illinois.

Position in Brief: The League supports development of a comprehensive land use policy for Illinois that provides for orderly growth while preserving the environment, conserving natural resources and providing needed open space. The State should identify, plan for and have the final authority over key and critical areas within the state. Standards and guidelines for land use should be developed by the State with local governments making purely local decisions. At every stage there should be citizen input. The State should plan for adequate supplies of low and moderate income housing with every community providing a percentage under some kind of fair share plan. The League favors regional planning agencies with mandatory and continuous funding from local, regional and state sources. The League supports state enabling legislation for development impact fees.

LAND USE POLICY (1972, 1973, 1974, revised in 1975, 1977, 1997, and 1999): The League of Women Voters supports the development of a comprehensive land use policy for Illinois that provides for orderly growth while preserving the environment, conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space and protection of prime agricultural land from lesser uses and intensive development.

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

A state agency with adequate staff and funding should be responsible for forming and implementing land use decisions. Opportunities for citizen participation should be available at every stage of land use planning.

Conservation of natural resources must be the established policy of the state, and citizens should be made aware of the role they can play in conservation. Comprehensive land use planning and citizen education are the major thrusts to harmonize growth and the preservation of resources.

The League supports regional planning and continuous mandatory funding for regional planning agencies from local, state and federal resources (see also LWVUS Natural Resources position, pg. 46).

Low and Moderate Income Housing The League believes the State should plan for adequate supplies of low and moderate-income housing. Builders of large developments and planned unit developments should be required to provide a

percentage of their units for low and moderate income housing. Some kind of fair-share plan should be developed so that every community will have a percentage of low and moderate income housing, rather than having it concentrated in a few areas of the state. This kind of housing should be attractive and diversified in design and should be subsidized by both state and federal levels.

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

Development Impact Fees LWVIL supports legislation at the state level regarding development impact fees. It is appropriate for such legislation to address fees for capital expenditures for schools, libraries, parks/open space, transportation, utilities and emergency services. Such legislation should be enabling only, and not directive. Only municipalities and counties should have the authority to assess development impact fees, and state guidelines should be adaptable to home rule and non-home rule communities. The test for validity of impact fees in Illinois should be “rational nexus” and not “specifically and uniquely attributable.” Enabling legislation should strive to effect some standardization of impact fee programs statewide, with flexibility for each to be designed to meet local needs.

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

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

LWVIL action The land use position has been used to:

- Support passage of legislation that protects prime farmland from lesser uses.
- Educate League members and other citizens on the need to preserve farmland from erosion and over-development.
- Participate in a conflict resolution project with farm groups and other environmental organizations.
- Support legislation to identify wetlands needing protection, followed by participation in a state advisory committee to implement the law.
- Support 1991 legislation giving the state some jurisdiction over dwindling wetlands.
- Provide local League testimony in opposition to the destruction of local wetlands, most recently in Lake County.
- Promote intergovernmental cooperation and public involvement in implementing a comprehensive plan for Lake County, providing a balance for orderly growth and

transportation needs while protecting the environment, conserving natural resources and preserving natural heritage.

- Support a position by the Naperville League on long-term ecological impacts and public health concerns of the Naperville Park District's trap-shooting program in an area containing wetlands and provide comments to regulating authorities on the issuance of a permit for continuance of the trap-shooting program.
- Lobby (1999), at the request of the Cook County League, in opposition to developing land on the west bank of the Des Plaines River in the Chevalier Woods Forest Preserve, which is both forest and flood plain, as a gambling casino.
- Sponsor informational meetings and symposiums related to the economic, social and environmental problems associated with uncontrolled growth or urban sprawl and "smart growth" solutions to these problems, beginning in the late 1990s.
- Establish a task force (1998) to develop a process for local Leagues to follow in addressing transportation issues, including the active inclusion of public participation in local transportation needs and issues.
- Add a "Smart Growth" issue specialist to the LWVIL Issues Committee.
- In 1999, establish a Smart Growth committee to educate and encourage local League participation with their communities on issues related to uncontrolled growth and work on related issues at the state level.
 - ✓ Presented a "smart growth" panel at the LWVIL 2000 Issues Briefing.
 - ✓ Established a working relationship with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) to promote the regional planning process and facilitate meetings throughout the Chicago region.
 - ✓ Established a working relationship with the Center for Neighborhood Technology to improve public participation in regional planning in the 6 Chicagoland counties.
 - ✓ In 2001, worked in coalition to pass (unsuccessfully) a series of seven "smart growth" bills.
 - ✓ Testified in support of additional public transportation.
 - ✓ Participated as a public member in the General Assembly's "Illinois Growth Task Force."
 - ✓ Monitored and supported legislation that balances the desire for growth of communities with the need to protect farmland, green spaces and air and water quality, as well as promoting transportation options and increased housing availability.
- In 2002 and 2003, the LWVIL partnered with the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's comprehensive land use planning process for the 2030 plan and was represented at planning sessions held by Metropolis 2020.
- LWVIL presented testimony at the recertification hearing regarding the Chicago Area Transportation Study's (CATS) continuation as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Chicagoland area. It also provided testimony for the Illinois Growth Task Force and approved findings of the Committee.
- LWVIL gave testimony before a Senate committee, sent out action alerts and worked with coalition partners for Tollway reform.

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION: LARGE-SCALE LIVESTOCK FACILITIES

Support for strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels.

Position in Brief: The LWV supports strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels to include statewide environmental controls, public hearings prior to siting and regional and/or county control of siting.

LARGE-SCALE LIVESTOCK FACILITIES (1999): The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports strict regulations of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and/or county levels to include:

- 1) Appropriate statewide environmental controls:
 - a) implement siting criteria to protect water sensitive areas;
 - b) require that all large-scale livestock facilities management plans be submitted to the appropriate agency and be available to the public;
 - c) require that rates of the most potentially damaging components (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, heavy metals) be used as parameters for livestock waste application on crops to minimize land and water pollution;
 - d) require set back distances from bodies of water, wells for human consumption and residences necessary to protect public health;
 - e) require owners to provide bonding, insurance indemnity funds or other financial assurances to ensure that the owners, not the taxpayers, pay for the cost of cleanups from spills or closing of facilities;
 - f) require inspections more frequently than once per year to ensure compliance with environmental standards and practices;
 - g) extend current rules for lagoons to all types of waste handling facilities;
 - h) not distinguish between farm and non-farm residences in setback distances from facilities.
- 2) Public hearing to give notice of the intention to site a facility, determine compliance with state, regional and/or local criteria, and determine compliance with state environmental criteria.
- 3) Regional and /or county control of siting.

Background Delegates to the 1999 LWVIL Convention adopted by concurrence a position on large-scale livestock facilities developed and presented by the Jackson County League. Leading up to and following the concurrence, local Leagues held informational and roundtable discussions on the environmental and economic impacts of increased livestock production in Illinois.

LWVIL action The League became concerned in 2005 about risks to the set of regulations on Illinois' large-scale livestock facilities negotiated in 1999 and passed by

the General Assembly as part of the Livestock Management Facilities Act. The Illinois Livestock Development Initiative, an outcome of a Livestock Summit convened by the Governor in the Fall of 2005, could streamline environmental controls, change setback requirements, and limit public participation relating to the siting and operations of Illinois' large-Scale livestock facilities. The Illinois League will continue to monitor initiatives and legislation impacting Illinois' large-scale livestock facilities.

LWVIL NATURAL RESOURCES POSITION: PESTICIDES

Support for reduction in pesticide use and the promotion of non-toxic alternatives.

Position in Brief: Support for reduction of exposure to all pesticides. The use of non-toxic alternatives should be encouraged.

PESTICIDES (1991): The League of Women Voters of Illinois supports the reduction of exposure to all pesticides and urges the use of non-toxic alternatives. Governmental bodies should encourage a reduction in pesticide use through the promotion of management programs such as integrated pest management, sustainable agriculture and non-toxic control techniques.

Background The position was adopted by delegates at the 1991 LWVIL Convention and is based on a 1990 Lake Michigan Inter-League position.

LWVIL action

- The League has supported the adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policies, especially in schools, and opposed the preemption of local governmental pesticide regulations.
- Local Leagues have co-sponsored sustainable agriculture conferences and integrated pest management forums, and worked with school districts in the implementation of IPM policies.
- In 1993, as part of a statewide local League network, several local Leagues have joined the efforts of the Illinois Pesticide Education Network and the Safer Pest Control Project and have become part of the process of gathering and sharing information on better and safer ways to prevent pest problems in the home and community.
- Beginning in 1996, the LWVIL joined the Yards for Nature Campaign. The focus of the project is to inform the public about the hazards of unnecessary chemical pesticides on lawns and green space and to provide resources to individuals and groups interested in non-chemical alternatives for maintaining a healthy lawn.
- In 1998, the LWVIL participated in a task force convened by the Safer Pest Control Project to identify policies and programs needed in Illinois to protect children from unnecessary exposure to pesticides. In 1999, the League joined A Better Choice Campaign for Healthier Schools formed by the task force. This coalition lobbied successfully in support of legislation amending the Structural Pest Control Act by requiring the adoption of an integrated pest management (IPM) program in schools and the Illinois Pesticide Act by requiring notification to parents and staff prior to pesticide application inside school buildings and on school grounds.
- In 2002, LWVIL attended the Healthy Schools summit and joined the Illinois Healthy Schools Campaign, a statewide coalition working to heighten awareness with legislators, schools, and parents on the need for environmentally safe schools.

SOCIAL POLICY

Summary of League of Women Voters of the United States Positions and Major Action by the Illinois League Under the LWVUS Positions

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

CHILD CARE (1988, based on positions reached from 1969-88): Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it.

LWVIL action LWVIL joined Voices for Illinois Children and others advocating for legislation to increase families' options for childcare. The League supports childcare subsidies to income eligible, but non-TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) families. LWVIL has supported initiatives which enhance the quality of child care, as well as legislation to increase the supply of child care providers and to require state agencies to offer flexible work schedules in order to reduce employees' child care needs. Local Leagues have worked for an increased supply of childcare by producing local directories, surveying their communities and working for after-school day care programs (see LWVIL Children's Services position, pg. 58).
(see Early Intervention for Children at Risk, this section)

EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT RISK (1994): Support policies and programs that promote the wellbeing, development and safety of all children.

Background From 1991 - 1999, LWVIL and Illinois Leagues conducted an action campaign to promote public understanding of the importance of early intervention for children at risk, encompassing national and state positions on poverty, income assistance, access to health care, education and child care, and improved services and funding of Illinois agencies serving children. LWVIL spearheaded the successful campaign to make early intervention for children at risk a LWVUS Issue for Emphasis for the 1994-96 biennium, and the Illinois delegation to the LWVUS 1994 Convention was instrumental in the adoption of the LWVUS new early intervention for children at risk position.

The 1995 LWVIL Convention extended the state League's support for children at risk issues by adopting the Breaking the Cycle of Violence in the Lives of Children action focus. A statewide committee was formed and worked throughout the biennium to produce an educational and action guide for use by local Leagues. This action focus was extended for the 1997-99 biennium.

LWVIL action The League has advocated for such Start Early programs in early education, Healthy Families Illinois and health care coverage of uninsured children.

At the Congressional level, the LWVIL urged that the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Violent Youth Crime Act of 1996, and Violent and Repeat Juvenile Offender Act of 1997 include prevention and early intervention provisions as strategies against crime (see LWVIL Criminal Justice position, pg. 16).

LWVIL participates in advocacy initiatives of Voices for Illinois Children through Voices Leadership Committee which is an effort to organize action by Senatorial districts throughout Illinois. These initiatives include early childhood education, childcare, intervention for young children with developmental delays or disabilities, home visiting programs for at-risk families, mental health supports, health insurance and after school programs.

The League also works in coalition with Action for Children (formerly Day Care Action Council), Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, Ounce of Prevention and Early Learning Illinois.

(see LWVIL Children's Services position, pg. 58, and LWVIL Mental Health position, pg. 63)

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY (1989; based on positions reached in 1969, 1972 and 1980): Support equal access to education, employment and housing. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment and Housing

Education – Integration, Quality Education, Tuition Tax Credits, Federal Programs, Education Financing

LWVIL action LWVIL continues to oppose both state and federal tuition tax credits and school voucher proposals. In November 1999, the LWVIL filed a suit in Federal Court to block implementation of Illinois' 1999 Tuition Tax Credit law. The suit was based on League's long-term commitment to adequately funded public education and League principles calling for free public education under the LWVIL Equal Opportunity's position (see LWVIL Schools position, pg. 24).

Employment/Job Training, Job Creation

LWVIL action Illinois Leagues have monitored Job Training Partnership Act programs. LWVIL has supported state legislation to strengthen employment protections available under federal civil rights laws. LWVIL continues to support job set-asides in government programs and strategies to move TANF recipients into long-term employment in jobs that place them above the federal poverty line. League opposes any reduction for education and training in the proposed TANF rules.

Equal Rights

LWVIL action The League made a tremendous commitment to passing the Equal Right Amendment in Illinois, including efforts to change the General Assembly's 3/5 ratification rule to a simple majority. The League has worked to bring Illinois laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA, including support of gender neutral insurance practices and support of re-establishment of the State Commission on the Status of Women, on which members sit on various working groups. In 2002, the League again

worked with an ERA Illinois coalition to obtain ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in the Illinois Legislature. The ERA amendment passed the Illinois House in Spring 2003. Local League members extensively lobbied their senators, especially in targeted districts throughout 2003 and 2004, however, passage of ERA failed in the 93rd Illinois General Assembly.

Fair Housing

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

Nondiscrimination, Affirmative Action and Pay Equity

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

FISCAL POLICY (1984, 1985 and 1986): Support adequate, flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax; promote responsible deficit policies; support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

LWVIL action In 1993, the LWVIL and several local Leagues joined the newly established League of Women Voters Federal Budget Network, which evolved into the Grassroots Lobby Corps. In 2001, LWVUS and LWVIL joined the First Things First Coalition in advocating that the federal government put “first things first” and spend revenues on necessary government programs that the League supports rather than cut taxes. The League testified at a rally on April 11, 2001 and participated in a Grassroots lobbying effort opposing the tax cut (see LWVIL State Fiscal Policies position, pg. 37).

GUN CONTROL (1990, amended in 1994, 1998): Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

LWVIL action The LWVIL spearheaded the successful campaign to adopt a national gun control position on the floor of the 1990 LWVUS Convention. Illinois League members have continued their lobbying efforts to strengthen both national and state law (see LWVIL Gun Control position, pg. 22).

HEALTH CARE (1993): Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

LWVIL action The League has worked to improve access to health care by supporting a variety of legislative initiatives, including: extended medical assistance for TANF families; expanded Medicaid funding for prenatal care, pregnant and nursing women and children under six; allowing nurse practitioners and nurse midwives to serve eligible Medicaid patients; financial incentives to increase health care workers in underserved areas; allowing women to select an obstetrician/ gynecologist as a primary health care provider in managed care plans; insurance portability; and access to health care for uninsured children. Local Leagues have urged their counties to provide health services for the indigent and have urged county health departments to provide access to family planning information and abortion services. The League has been supportive of the expanded role of Healthy Families Illinois, a voluntary home visitation program for first time mothers (see Early Intervention for Children at Risk, this section). In 1995, LWVIL joined the Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care that educates on national and state health issues and is the primary supporter of Illinois Managed Care Patients Bill of Rights. In 2004, LWVIL worked with the Campaign for Better Health Care to pass the Health Care Justice Act. This Act provides for a bi-partisan Task Force that will hold a hearing in every Illinois Congressional District. These hearings now have been scheduled at two or three a month, ending in April 2006. The Task Force then should draft a plan for legislation to provide health care for everyone in Illinois by January 2007.

MEETING BASIC HUMAN NEEDS (1989; based on positions reached from 1971-88): Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families (see LWVIL Income Assistance position, pg. 61).

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

Housing Supply

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

two such Coalitions, DuPage Housing Action Coalition and Kane County Housing Action Coalition.

Illinois Leagues have worked for an increased supply of low and moderate income housing through litigation, lobbying, participating on various advisory commissions to monitor Community Development Block Grants, monitoring housing authorities and by working with zoning boards. Leagues have worked in coalitions to increase housing for the homeless (see LWWIL Land Use position, pg. 47).

Support Services

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

Transportation

LWWIL action LWWIL supports improved mass transportation in Illinois by calling for adequate funding and effective regional planning with such agencies as the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). LWWIL supports legislation providing up to twelve months of transitional transportation assistance to former TANF recipients no longer eligible due to increased income (see LWWIL Land Use position, pg. 47).

URBAN POLICY (1979, revised 1989): Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

LWWIL action League action in all of the areas of Social Policy, as well as federal and state fiscal issues, represent a significant commitment to improve the quality of life in Illinois cities.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION (1994): Support violence prevention programs in communities.

LWWIL action (See LWWUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk position, this section).

<p>NOTE: THIS EDITION OF <i>WHERE WE STAND</i> COVERS THE PERIOD 2005-2007. AT THE 2001 LWWIL CONVENTION, DELEGATES VOTED TO DROP THE MARITAL LAW POSITION. THE POSITION WAS CONSIDERED TOO OUT OF DATE TO BE ACTED ON. THE POSITION HAD NOT EVER BEEN USED FOR ACTION ON THE STATE LEVEL.</p>

LWVIL SOCIAL POLICY POSITION: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Support for improved state and local services by Illinois state agencies serving children and their families.

Position in Brief: The League believes that the State should play the leading role in meeting the needs of children and their families and have the primary role in funding to ensure that quality services are equitably available throughout the state. The League supports a continuum of community-based services that strengthens and preserves families and fosters healthy growth and development of children. Prevention and early intervention should have high priority. The League supports a juvenile court system that provides opportunities for effective protection, treatment, and rehabilitation. Detention should be reserved for delinquent children who meet professional screening criteria and provided separately from adult programs. The League opposes the automatic transfer of children to the criminal court and the death penalty for children.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES (1967, 1972, 1977, revised 1996): The League believes that the State should play the leading role in meeting the needs of children and their families. This responsibility applies across systems of care regardless of age or legal status of the children.

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

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

Shelter care and other services suited to their needs should be available to children whose cases are pending. Detention should be reserved for delinquent children who meet professional screening criteria and provided separately from adult programs.

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

is considered in the juvenile court or the criminal court. The League opposes the death penalty for offenses committed by children.

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

- Communicate and cooperate with each other to provide coordinated services, clear guidelines for responsibility and information to the public about the availability of services;
- Develop long range plans which include coordination of local service delivery, provide for citizen input and review, and encourage local initiatives;
- Establish family-focused, community-based systems of care;
- Set and enforce program and personnel standards consistent with national accreditation standards;
- Encourage the recruitment, retention and training of sufficient numbers of qualified staff at all levels;
- Ensure that agencies are directed and staffed by qualified personnel regardless of political affiliation; and
- Evaluate programs and search for new methods to improve services.

Background From its inception, the League worked on reform issues relating to maternal and infant care, mothers' pensions and child labor. In 1963, LWWIL Convention delegates adopted a study to evaluate the structure and financing of Illinois welfare services to children and their families, dividing the work into three parts: the child in need of financial assistance; the child in need of protection; and the child and the courts. The timing enabled the League to take action not only on Aid to Dependent Children, but to shape the modernization of the Juvenile Court Act, the first laws on child abuse, the newly created Department of Children and Family Services and to lay the groundwork for the Illinois Youth Commission to become part of a code department.

LWWIL Convention delegates added a study of day care in 1969. In 1971, the LWWIL board decided that it would be more appropriate to take action on behalf of the child in need of financial assistance under the LWWUS income assistance position adopted that year. Delegates to the 1975 LWWIL Convention called for a study of the level of services of state agencies serving children. The position adopted two years later pulled together three elements: a reaffirmation of state positions, concurrence with LWW of Cook County positions, and the new consensus on administration. In 1979, the LWWIL received a grant to develop a statewide juvenile court watching project.

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

LWWIL action League's action in the 1990's to date, includes

- Celebrated the 100th anniversary of the juvenile court (Julia Lathrop, second president of the LWWIL, was one of the founders).

- Joined as an *amicus* in *Artist M* (addressing the rights of children under the Federal Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980) and *White/Lawrence v People* (challenging a law having a disproportionate effect on minority youth). Monitored the *B H v McDonald* consent decree (a class action suit to improve services to children under the care of DCFS).
- Opposed an attempt to amend the Illinois Constitution in a way that would weaken laws that protect children.
- Spearheaded legislation authorizing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to advocate in court on behalf of the child.
- Urged Congress to retain the core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and to provide funding for prevention.
- Advocated for quality childcare and an array of prevention and intervention services that strengthen families rather than rely on foster and residential care.
- Supported the Children's Mental Health Act of 2003 and participated in the development of the *Strategic Plan for Building a Comprehensive Children's Mental Health System in Illinois* (sent to the Governor June 2005).
- Worked to refine the language of the Juvenile Justice Reform Provisions of 1998. Monitored implementation of the law to encourage local Leagues to become active in county juvenile justice councils and to assure that the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) model becomes a reality.
- Strengthened the rights of minors by protecting the confidentiality of juvenile records, requiring legal counsel during interrogation by law enforcement and attempting to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction.
- Supported measures that increase the number of juveniles whose cases will be individually reviewed by the juvenile court before possible transfer to criminal court. Continued to oppose automatic transfer.
- Encouraged the development of alternatives to detention; opposed detention of non-delinquent children; opposed detention of juveniles in adult facilities; and participated in the revision of County Juvenile Detention Standards.
- Supported Redeploy Illinois, which will enable counties to create a continuum of community-based sanctions and treatment alternatives for juvenile offenders who would otherwise be incarcerated.
- Called for a continuum of juvenile correctional supervision, treatment and reentry services consistent with national standards. Participated in a visit to Missouri facilities. Endorsed a proposal that would separate the Juvenile Division from the Department of Corrections and place it within a new Department of Juvenile Justice.

The League is part of the Children's Mental Health Partnership, monitors the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and works in coalition with the Juvenile Justice Initiative.

(See LWWIL Mental Health position, pg. 63, and LWWIL Income Assistance position, pg. 61)

(See LWWUS Child Care and Early Intervention for Children at Risk positions, pg. 53).

LWVIL SOCIAL POLICY POSITIONS: INCOME ASSISTANCE

Support for income assistance and supportive services for all low-income individuals and families.

INCOME ASSISTANCE (1971, revised 1997): LWVIL believes that the federal government should bear primary responsibility for financing programs designed to meet the basic needs of individuals and families. LWVIL supports secondary state funding for income assistance and supportive services for all low-income individuals and families. The administration of income assistance and supportive services requires the recruitment, retention, and training of sufficient numbers of qualified personnel; clear guidelines for responsibility; adequate information systems; and program evaluation.

Background The LWVIL and the LWVUS conducted simultaneous studies of income assistance in 1971. The state position was inadvertently dropped an unknown number of years ago from *Where We Stand*, and was reinstated by delegates to the 1993 LWVIL Convention. The national position was updated and revised in 1988, and is now included under Meeting Basic Human Needs.

In 1996, at the direction of the state board, a statewide committee reviewed the LWVIL Income Assistance position. A revised position was adopted at the 1997 LWVIL Convention. This revision affirms that federal funding should be the primary source for income assistance; the State's role should be a strong secondary, not supplemental, source.

LWVIL action The League continually works for adequate grant levels and automatic cost-of-living increases, along with better salaries and a separation of clerical and casework staff functions for the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). LWVIL is concerned over the IDHS staff reductions in local offices resulting in less than quality services due to very high caseload responsibilities. LWVIL has supported retention of and increased funding for, assistance programs such as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), food stamps, low-income utility payments, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program and family planning programs. The League worked for a rewrite of the Illinois Public Aid Code and a strengthened emergency assistance system. The League supported legislation that gave an increase in the TANF grant to Illinois families.

At the federal level, the League opposed the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This legislation ended the federal entitlement income support to all low-income families who meet eligibility criteria and shifted major responsibility for meeting basic human needs from the federal government to the states. Working in coalition with other advocacy organizations, LWVIL followed and responded to state welfare proposals and submitted comments on the Illinois Plan for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). League is concerned about possible proposals in the TANF reauthorization, i.e., increase in work hours, allowable

work activities, child care needs and the flexibility provided to the states to work with caseload recipients moving to work and out of poverty, as well as the proposed increase in number of required work hours. League is a member of Midwest Partners, a six state coalition that works together on issues related to TANF reauthorization. League's concerns continue to focus on the need for additional jobs with sufficient wages and supportive services (accessible quality child care; education and job training; transportation and housing; benefits for legal immigrants and single, childless adults; and the need for adequate data to assess the impact of welfare changes over time). League remains concerned that all eligible residents are able to access benefits for which they qualify.

During 1996-97, the League monitored and provided input into the state human services reorganization process.

In 1999, the League advocated for the passage and funding of the Illinois Equal Justice Act designed to help lower-income families navigate the complex legal system on such civil matters as Medicaid, food stamps and illegal evictions.

LWVIL supported legislation during the spring 2003 legislative session to establish a refundable state earned income tax credit (EITC), a critical form of income assistance to help working families make the transition from welfare to work. League worked in coalition with Voices for Illinois Children and other organizations on a long-term educational and advocacy campaign to enact a state EITC.

League supports the Voices for Illinois Children's Budget and Tax Policy Initiative that identifies spending policies in legislation that affect children and families. League continues to support effective child support guidelines and collection efforts.

The League works in partnership with the Work, Welfare and Families Coalition and the Housing Action Illinois (formerly SHAC) for a broad voice in social policy.

LWVIL continues to work with coalitions to improve the well being of low-income families through monitoring reauthorization of TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), WIA (Workforce Investment Act) and the Food Stamp program.

LWVIL SOCIAL POLICY POSITION: MENTAL HEALTH

Support for comprehensive and coordinated services for mentally ill adults and children in both state facilities and community-based programs.

Position in Brief: The League supports a comprehensive and coordinated system of treatment and rehabilitation services for mentally ill adults and children. There should be adequate funding, planning, program standards, and personnel training requirements for both state facilities and community programs. The League supports a broad array of adequate and accessible community services. Although primary responsibility should rest with the state, funding from local, federal, and non-governmental sources should be encouraged. A system of local boards to levy taxes, administer all funds, and to plan and coordinate services should be required throughout the state. The State should require local governments to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.

MENTAL HEALTH (1987 and 1989): The League supports a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. The Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities should ensure both adequate state hospitals and community services to treat and rehabilitate the seriously mentally ill. These services should be integrated with those of other state agencies.

The League supports a state mandate that adequate and accessible community services be available for seriously mentally ill persons of all ages. The array of services should include: screening and evaluation, community hospitalization, medication management and counseling, crisis intervention, case management, day treatment, life skills programs, residential programs, job training, social and recreational activities, educational services, family support and respite programs, and transportation.

The State should provide adequate funding for state facilities and should be the primary source of funding for community-based mental health services. Local government, together with federal and non-government sources, should also contribute to community services. Funding should be tied to identified needs and effectiveness of services.

State and local government should share the responsibility for planning for community services; implementation should be left to local government. A system of local boards to administer funds for services for the mentally ill should be required throughout the state. The boards should have the power to tax and to allocate state and federal funds for community services and for hospitalization of mentally ill persons. The boards should coordinate and monitor community services.

The State should set and enforce standards for all mental health programs and facilities it funds.

The State should also be responsible for evaluating community-based services. There should be minimum training requirements for professionals and other personnel working in state-funded programs. The State should require local governments to provide in their zoning ordinances for residential programs for mentally ill persons.

The League encourages increased use of involuntary commitment to outpatient services of seriously mentally ill persons, when appropriate, to assist in keeping them from repeated and prolonged hospitalizations.

Insurance companies should be required to offer coverage for mental illness on the same basis as physical illness.

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

Background The 1985 LWVIL Convention established a task force to examine the state mental health system, and in 1986, its findings were reported in *Public Policy on Mental Illness in Illinois*.

The 1987 LWVIL Convention established a position by concurrence, based on the task force conclusions, and adopted a two-year study of all aspects of community mental health services. Consensus was reached in 1989.

A Profile of Community Services for the Mentally Ill of Illinois, published in 1989, reported a failure to develop services. As a result, the 1989 LWVIL Convention adopted a two-year Action Campaign to promote community education and combat the stigma of mental illness. Grants were awarded to local Leagues to conduct specially designed projects.

In 1993, the League published *A Home of their Own*, a manual designed to assist local community advocates in their efforts to facilitate housing options.

In 1990, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the Public Citizen Health Research Group presented the League with a special award for Public Service to People with Serious Mental Illness.

LWVIL action LWVIL testified on quality of care and access to services in response to the closure of the Metropolitan Child and Adolescent Hospital in Chicago in 1997 and, in 1998, commented on an administrative rule affecting individual care grants for mentally ill children.

League worked in coalition for over five years to achieve insurance parity for mental illness. In the Spring of 2000, the General Assembly passed insurance parity with a sunset provision. In the Spring of 2005, the sunset provision was repealed.

Members participated in the Mental Health Rally held in Springfield on May 3, 2005, and lobbied legislators on an array of mental health bills which included supporting funding for community mental health services.

LWVIL provided written testimony in April 2004 on the Fee for Service (FFS) plan to the House Special Committee on the Fee-for-Service Initiative.

The League works in coalition with the Mental Health Summit, which is comprised of persons with mental illness and their families, advocacy groups, mental health service providers and legislators. The goal of the Summit is to make access, comprehensiveness, recovery, continuity of care and quality the hallmarks of mental health services in Illinois.

(See LWVUS Fair Housing position, pg. 55)

(See LWVIL Children's Services position, pg. 58)

ACTION GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUES

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

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

To ensure agreement on the interpretation of positions, to coordinate activities of the different levels of the League, and to enhance the effectiveness of League action campaigns, local Leagues are encouraged to consult with the state board about their action plans. As discussed below, **consultation is required whenever (a) the intended action would affect the jurisdiction of other Leagues and/or (b) a local League wishes to act at the state or national level on an issue which has not been the subject of a state or national call to action.**

ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: THE DECISION TO TAKE ACTION WHICH WILL AFFECT ONLY YOUR COMMUNITY RESTS WITH YOUR LOCAL LEAGUE BOARD.

LOCAL POSITION

In deciding to take action based on a local position, the board will want to consider:

- whether the contemplated action falls within the relevant position
- whether your members understand and support the action
- whether the action would be effective in your community

STATE, ILO OR NATIONAL POSITION

Local Leagues are encouraged to take action in their communities based directly on positions from other levels of League. Consultation with a board member from that League level may be helpful in planning action strategy.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE ABSENCE OF A LEAGUE POSITION

Issues can arise quickly in a community where League input would be helpful but a lengthy study process leading to a local position is not feasible and there is no applicable position at another level of League. There are a number of ways that local Leagues can help resolve such issues and play a dynamic, visible role in the community. For example, they may:

- bring diverse constituencies together to define the problem and facilitate a common solution
- sponsor public hearings
- provide objective research and education on the community issue
- sponsor educational forums

When the League is involved in a community issue without the basis of a formal position, it is critical that the League representatives remain objective and neutral. The League's role is to help the community reach consensus or air differing viewpoints in a calm, objective atmosphere.

ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD AFFECT THE JURISDICTION OF MORE THAN ONE LEAGUE REQUIRES CONSULTATION WITH THE BOARDS OF THE OTHER LEAGUES IN THE AREA INVOLVED.

The procedure to be followed will depend on the complexity of the issue and the number of Leagues involved. If only two or three Leagues are affected, all should agree (or have no objection) to the plan of action. If more than three Leagues are involved, there should be consensus on the contemplated action. You may contact a member of the state or ILO board for guidance.

ACTION AT THE STATE LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD INVOLVE CONTACT WITH STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS REQUIRES APPROVAL BY THE STATE BOARD.

If your League is contemplating state-level action that has not been requested by the LWVIL board, please contact the LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING ONLY THE JURISDICTION(S) OF THE LEAGUE WISHING TO ACT

The contemplated action may be based on positions from any League level and, as a general rule, will be given clearance by the state board. Consultation is needed, however, not only to keep the state board informed about all state-level advocacy but also to ensure that there is no conflict with other LWVIL action and to ensure that the action proposed is based on complete and current information. For example, in the course of a day a bill may be amended one or more times, and the League position may change accordingly. If action is approved, the local League may contact only its own legislators unless it has requested and received permission from other Leagues to lobby their legislators. Such was the case in 1993, when the DuPage County ILO successfully sought approval to lobby all state legislators on legislation relating to the DuPage County Airport Authority.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING JURISDICTIONS BEYOND THOSE OF THE LEAGUE WISHING TO ACT

If the basis for the contemplated action is a state or national position, the state board will evaluate the proposed action in the context of its legislative priorities. Clearance will be given if there is no conflict with other LWVIL action.

If the basis for the contemplated action is a local position, the state board will exercise extreme care in determining whether to approve such action. While using a local position as the basis for state-level action does not provide the most effective method for action and should not circumvent the state program planning process (through which changes to current state positions or new study items may be proposed), there are occasional circumstances when a local League may wish to pursue such action.

In such cases, the local League will be asked to prepare a request for permission to act to be distributed to all affected Leagues. The request should include a description of the type, goals, impact and time frame of the contemplated action, including which legislators the League proposes to lobby, and to the greatest extent possible, the general effect of the proposed action on other local Leagues. The LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President will review the request prior to distribution. The state board will evaluate the responses of the local Leagues and determine whether to grant permission to act. Points the board will consider include:

- Is the legislation permissive or binding?
- What are the geographic impact, level and visibility of the contemplated action?
- Is the issue divisive at any level?
- Is there conflict with any local, ILO, or state League position?
- Do any local Leagues object to the proposed action and why?

ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: ACTION THAT WOULD INVOLVE CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL REQUIRES APPROVAL BY THE NATIONAL LEAGUE.

If your League is contemplating action at the federal level that has not been requested by the national board, you must clear your plans with LWVUS. You may call the LWVUS office directly. If you have questions, you may contact the appropriate state legislative/issue specialist or the LWVIL Issues and Action Vice President for guidance.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS 2005-2007 PROGRAM SUMMARY

POSITIONS

GOVERNMENT

Constitutional Implementation and Amendments: Support for League positions to implement, amend and uphold the 1970 Illinois Constitution.

County Government Structure: Support for expanded citizen initiative powers to address county government structure and support for changes in the Illinois County Executive Act.

Criminal Justice: Support for improved criminal justice procedures and alternatives to incarceration.

Death Penalty Abolition: Support for abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

Gun Control: Support for handgun and assault weapon control.

Schools: Support for a public school system that is equitable in both quality for the student and financing for the taxpayer.

State Election Laws: Support for improved election laws and procedures applied uniformly throughout the state and opposition to term limits for members of the Illinois General Assembly.

State Fiscal Policies: Support for a diversified revenue system that principally relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees, is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive and simple.

State Redistricting: Support for a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use: Support for a state land use policy that addresses the problem of conflicting uses for the land resources of Illinois.

Large-Scale Livestock Facilities: Support for strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels.

Pesticides: Support for reduction in pesticide use and the promotion of non-toxic alternatives.

SOCIAL POLICY

Children's Services: Support for improved state and local services by Illinois state agencies serving children and their families.

Income Assistance: Support for income assistance and support services for all low-income individuals and their families.

Mental Health: Support for comprehensive and coordinated services for mentally ill adults and children in both state facilities and community-based programs.

ACTION FOCI and STUDIES

MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK: Promote efforts to increase voter education, reduce barriers to the electoral process, and improve election procedures based on findings of the Election Administration Reform Committee including monitoring the implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002. Assess and strengthen citizen participation in the state legislative process through the Democracy Project.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING: Promote efforts to provide stable, reliable and adequate revenues for public education and other social services.

STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION: Investigate the need for a State Constitutional Convention. The Constitution of the State of Illinois requires that the question of a need for a constitutional convention be submitted to the voters every twenty years, if not sooner. The question was last submitted to the voters in 1988.

IMMIGRATION: Study how Illinois should respond to the challenges and opportunities of immigration in the areas of economic policy, social policy, which includes education, and the governmental process.