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Program for Action

A Summary of Positions of the League of Women Voters Minnesota

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Introduction

Impact on Issues and Program for Action are designed to help members use LWVUS and LWVMN public policy positions effectively at state and local levels.

LWVMN's Program for Action is an indispensable resource for members. A clear understanding of LWVMN positions and their relationships to LWVUS positions will increase our influence at all levels of government.

In applying LWVUS and LWVMN positions to state, local and regional issues, it is the responsibility of the appropriate LWV board—depending on the level of action—to determine whether member understanding and agreement exist and whether the action makes sense in terms of timing, need and effectiveness.

The complete LWVUS Impact on Issues, with significant past actions and achievements, is available online at www.lwv.org. The LWVMN Program for Action, with significant past actions and achievements, is available online at www.lwvmn.org.

League of Women Voters Principles

- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.
- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.
- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

LWV PRINCIPLES

In addition to the items adopted for LWWUS and LWVMN Programs, LWV Principles may be the basis for state and local LWV actions. The Principles serve two functions according to LWWUS Bylaws:

- 1) as authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program, and
- 2) as a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels.

Action to implement the Principles is authorized by the appropriate LWV board once it determines that member understanding and agreement exist and that the action is appropriate.

- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation; promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest; share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare; promote a sound economy; and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

- ✓ The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Program Adopted by League of Women Voters U.S.

I. REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

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

Citizen Rights

Voting Rights:

Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

Citizen's Right to Know/ Citizen Participation:

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

Individual Liberties:

Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices:

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

Congress and the Presidency

Congress:

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

The Presidency:

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

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation:

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

Election Process

Apportionment:

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

Campaign Finance:

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

Election of the President:

Promote the election of the President and Vice-president by direct popular vote and work to abolish the Electoral College; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

Fiscal Policy:

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

II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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

Arms Control:

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending:

Work to limit reliance on military force; examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

Trade:

Support systematic reduction of tariff and nontariff trade barriers and support broad long-range presidential authority to negotiate trade agreements.

United Nations:

Support a strong, effective United Nations and its efforts to promote world peace and security, and meet the social, economic and humanitarian needs of the world's people.

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries:

Promote US policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES

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

Resource Management:

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

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control:

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

Public Participation:

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

Agricultural Policy:

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

IV. SOCIAL POLICY

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

Child Care:

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

Early Intervention for Children at Risk:

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

Equality of Opportunity:

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

Health Care:

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of care for all US residents and controls health care costs.

Meeting Basic Human Needs:

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

Gun Control:

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

Urban Policy:

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

Violence Prevention:

Support violence prevention programs in all communities.



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

- ✓ Competent personnel with clear responsibilities
- ✓ Coordination among agencies and levels of government
- ✓ Adequate financing
- ✓ Effective enforcement
- ✓ Well defined channels for citizen input and review

LWVMN Issue Positions

Government Issue Positions

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

Voting Rights:

LWVUS Position: Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. (1982)

Restoration of Voting Rights:

LWVMN position: Support an incarcerated person's right to access the vote following incarceration. (2013)

Election Laws:

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

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

Support:

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

Alternative Voting Systems:

LWVMN Position: LWVMN supports the option to use Instant Runoff Voting to elect State or Local Officials in single seat elections. LWVMN also supports the continued use of the plurality voting system in our elections. The LWVMN Board reserves the right to decide the appropriateness of legislation proposing to replace the plurality voting system with the Instant Runoff System at the state level.

LWVMN supports the right of local governments and municipalities to choose Instant Runoff Voting for their own local elections. Voters need to understand how votes in an election are tabulated and how a candidate actually wins an election. If a change in elections systems occurs, LWVMN supports adequate voter education. LWVMN does not support Approval, Borda Count, or Condorcet as alternative voting systems. (2005)

Election Process: Apportionment:

LWVUS Position: Congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. (Revised 1982) *LWVMN Position:* Support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local governmental bodies.

Support:

- ✓ Regular and equitable reapportionment, with definite procedures established to ensure prompt redistricting by the Legislature or by a reapportionment commission; support of procedures which provide for:
 - ✓ Compact, contiguous districts giving advantage to no particular person or group
 - ✓ Public accessibility to legislative or commission deliberations and action
 - ✓ Prompt judicial review (1979)

Campaign Finance:

LWVUS Position: Methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process. (Revised 1982)

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

Support:

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

Citizen Rights:

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

Open Meetings and Open Records:

LWVUS Position: Democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government. Governmental bodies must protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible. (Principles, 1974, 1982)

Individual Liberties:

LWVUS Position: Individual liberties are guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged. (1982)

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices:

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

Organization of Government:

LWVUS Position: The structures of the U.S. Congress must be characterized by openness, accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance. Presidential power should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a dynamic balance between the executive and legislative branches. Accountability and responsibility to the people require unnecessary secrecy between the President and Congress be eliminated. (Revised 1982)

LWVMN Position: Support improved structure and procedures for the Minnesota Legislature and executive branch; support of an improved process for amending the Minnesota Constitution; support timely redistricting based substantially on population and affecting all state and local government districts.

Oppose unicameral state legislature.

Support:

- ✓ Legislative reform through improved procedures for providing information, adequate research assistance, no increase in size (reduction in size is desirable), realistic compensation for legislators, improved organization of committees, legislative sessions of adequate length, and allowing the Legislature to call itself into special session. The Legislature should meet annually and should have the power to determine the time of meeting and length of session and should have the power to recess (1955, 1968)
- ✓ A post-auditor appointed by and directly responsible to the Legislature (1955)
- ✓ Changes in executive structure characterized by clear lines of authority and responsibility, elimination of duplication and overlapping of agencies, a structure of organization designed to focus on current and emerging problems, and a system of standard nomenclature (1970)
- ✓ Measures to change the process of amending the state Constitution by retaining a simple majority vote by the Legislature in proposing an amendment and requiring a simple majority of those voting on the question for ratification (1947, 1962)
- ✓ Oppose unicameral legislature (1999)

Initiative, Referendum and Recall:

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

Support:

- ✓ Continued initiation of constitutional amendments by the legislative branch; opposition to all forms of voter initiative of such amendments (direct, indirect or advisory)
- ✓ Continued compulsory voter referenda on constitutional amendments
- ✓ Strict procedural limits on any form of initiative, referendum or recall considered or adopted in Minnesota, including restrictions on
 - ✓ Time span for collecting signatures
 - ✓ Eligibility requirements for persons signing and collecting petitions
 - ✓ Percentage of signatures required, geographic distribution of signers, and verification of signatures
 - ✓ Size of vote required for passage
 - ✓ Procedure for repeal or amendment of a successful initiative or referendum
 - ✓ Contributions to and spending for ballot issue campaigns (1980)

Oppose:

- ✓ Direct initiative and advisory initiative on statutes; no agreement on indirect initiative on statutes
- ✓ Optional and compulsory referenda on statutes; no agreement on petition referenda on statutes
- ✓ Voter recall of members of the legislature and state constitutional officers, no agreement on recall of judges or appointed officials

Financing State Government:

LWVUS Position (Tax Policy): The federal system, taken as a whole, should be progressive, not proportional. LWVUS supports income as the major tax base for federal revenues. (1984)

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

Support:

- ✓ A balanced and diversified revenue system which relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees
- ✓ The following criteria for evaluating individual revenue sources and the overall revenue system:
 - ✓ **Competitiveness:** Allows Minnesota to compete with other states and nations as a location of economic activity, recognizing that the revenue system is only one of many factors involved in location choice and that the level and effectiveness of public services affects competitiveness
 - ✓ **Efficiency:** Maintains a reasonable relationship between administration and compliance costs and the amount of revenue generated
 - ✓ **Equity:** Imposes a similar revenue burden on taxpayers in like circumstances
 - ✓ **Progressivity:** Requires that those with a greater ability pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes
 - ✓ **Reliability:** Provides a stable source of revenue
 - ✓ **Responsiveness:** Adjusts to changes in economic conditions and reflects long term growth
 - ✓ **Simplicity:** Is understandable to the taxpayer
- ✓ A progressive **individual income tax** with a graduated rate schedule
- ✓ A broad-based **retail sales tax** with exemptions for essential items to reduce the impact on low-income persons

- ✓ The use of an equitable **property tax** as the primary source of financing for services provided by local governments and a partial source of financing education (see the Financing Education position.)
- ✓ A **corporation franchise tax** which is competitive with other states providing a comparable level of public services. LWVMN supports a corporation franchise tax which equitably taxes all corporations earning profits from their business activities within the state
- ✓ The use of other sources of revenue, such as user fees and special assessments, for funding specific activities and projects. These charges should be assessed with a sensitivity to the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system
- ✓ Achieving social policy goals through open and visible expenditures rather than by granting deductions, exclusions and credits. If deductions, exclusions and credits are granted, they should be:
 - ✓ Evaluated on the basis of their compliance with the criteria established to judge the overall revenue system
 - ✓ Determined to be the most cost-effective means of achieving intended purpose
 - ✓ Reviewed periodically to justify continuance
- ✓ The distribution of state-collected revenues to local governments based upon the following principles:
 - ✓ It is appropriate for state and local governments to share in the cost of services provided by local governments that benefit all Minnesotans.
 - ✓ If necessary, state funding may be used to assure that local community services are available on an equitable basis.
 - ✓ The state should not impose statutory limits on local governments' ability to raise and spend revenue for local community services.
 - ✓ Programs which distribute state-collected revenues to local governments should enhance the equity, progressivity and efficiency of the overall revenue system.

- ✓ Once enacted, promised distributions of state-collected revenues to local governments should be a reliable source of revenue to local governmental units.
- ✓ The principle that state legislation mandating local governments to provide specific services should identify adequate and appropriate revenue sources
- ✓ Long-term financial management of all state government funds
- ✓ Consideration of long-term projections of revenue and expenditures when making budget decisions
- ✓ An adequate budget reserve, established during good economic times, to be used in recession years to sustain expenditures for necessary services

Government Spending:

LWVMN Position has four parts:

- I. **Broad Goals:** The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN) believes long-term vision as well as immediate concerns should guide state spending decisions.
 - A. LWVMN strongly supports the following broad goals (by priority):
 1. Provide high-quality PreK12 educational opportunities for Minnesotans.
 2. Provide for a basic level of health and human services for all Minnesotans.
 3. Protect the state's natural environment.
 4. Encourage economic self-sufficiency.
 5. Provide for the public safety.
 6. Provide high-quality post-secondary. educational opportunities for Minnesotans.
 7. Preserve the state's open spaces (i.e., parks, state buildings).
 8. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit.
 - B. LWVMN also supports the following goals:

1. Ensure that all Minnesotans receive a basic level of local public services without regard to individual or community wealth.
 2. Maintain a viable state-wide transportation system, including public transit.
 3. Create a business climate that will allow MN business to compete nationally and internationally.
 4. Ensure timely resolution of court cases.
- C. LWVMN does not support the goal of limiting state and local expenditures to a legislated percent of personal incomes.

II. Spending Priorities

- A. LWVMN believes that the highest priority areas for state spending are the following:
1. PreK-12 (regular) education
 2. Health Care
 3. Environmental protection

Relative Priority: When considering specific proposals requiring choices, LWVMN believes that some components of state spending should be given higher priority than others.

1. Regular education over vocational education
2. Vocational education over special education
3. Special education over community education and recreation
4. Health care and family support over nursing home care
5. Environmental protection over parks and recreation
6. Roads and transit over highway patrol
7. Job-related economic security over business incentives
8. Property tax relief related to income over Homestead and Agricultural Credit Aid (HACA)
9. HACA over Local Government Aid
10. The court system and law enforcement over correctional institutions.

III. **Criteria for Limiting Spending**

A. When the state finds it necessary to limit spending, LWVMN supports use of the following criteria (by priority):

1. State subsidies for sports teams, convention centers, and similar projects should be among the first items to be curtailed.
2. Maintenance of existing infrastructure should take precedence over expenditures to increase the infrastructure.
3. Property tax relief programs should be directed to those with lower household incomes.
4. Services should be provided first to the most needy citizens.
5. Eligibility guidelines for public services should be adjusted to increase individual responsibility.

B. LWVMN opposes:

1. Making across-the-board cuts first, as a way to allocate funds
2. Placing more reliance on non-government organizations (such as churches and not-for-profit organizations) to deliver services
3. Reducing state funding for higher education and increasing reliance on tuition
4. Allowing services for the elderly to take precedence over those for children

IV. **Efficiency**

A. LWVMN supports enhancing efficiency and cost effectiveness in the provision of quality government services. To this end, LWVMN supports:

- ✓ Emphasizing prevention over treatment of problems
- ✓ Encouraging inter-governmental cooperation

B. LWVMN also supports:

- ✓ Providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers of child-care services and housing assistance

- ✓ Giving government employees more flexibility and incentives to manage the way they do their jobs
- ✓ Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results
- ✓ Using performance-based budgeting to emphasize outcomes over inputs and to hold government officials responsible for results
- ✓ Encouraging competition (private-private, public-private and public-public) to enhance efficiency

LWVMN does not support providing funds/grants to individuals to allow them to select providers for K-12 education.

Criminal Justice Issue Positions

Promote social and economic justice.

Judiciary:

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

Support:

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

Selection of Judges:

LWVMN Position: (a) Initial appointment of judgeship by the governor, who must choose from among a list of qualified candidates forwarded by a nominating commission. (b) End-of-term evaluation of the judge's performance by an evaluation commission, results to be made available to the public. (c) Retention election: voters choose to retain or not retain the judge. (2008)

Rationale:

- ✓ Appointment by the governor assures that new judges will be highly qualified and assures a role for the public on the commission. The commission should be broadly based and nonpartisan.
- ✓ End-of-term evaluation provides voters with good information when they vote for judges. It assures a role for the public both in submitting information to the commission and in serving on the commission; the commission should be broadly based and nonpartisan.
- ✓ A retention election gives the voting public the final word as to whether or not a judge should be kept in office. The merit selection/retention system has shown itself best at keeping politics and money out of elections. For those groups wishing to oust a judge there is a major disincentive: they cannot choose the judge's replacement.
- ✓ The merit selection/retention system has shown itself best at keeping politics and money out of elections. For those groups wishing to oust a judge there is a major disincentive: they cannot choose the judge's

Detail:

- ✓ As long as the current system for judicial selection prevails, LWVMN strongly favors retaining the incumbency designation on judicial ballots. (1999)

Corrections:

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

Adult Corrections Position Details

Support:

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

Juvenile Justice Position Details

Support:

- ✓ A program of evaluation of the juvenile justice system in Minnesota
- ✓ Continual evaluation of all existing programs for juveniles and their families funded and/or used by public agencies
- ✓ The availability of a complete continuum of services for troubled, delinquent, abused and neglected youth and their families. This includes quality community-based corrections in all geographic areas as an alternative to the traditional institutional setting in an attempt to assure the most successful

rehabilitation and prevent further offenses. It does not deny the value of secure institutional treatment for some. We define quality as including proper supervision, standards, inspections and screening of residents

- ✓ Maximum effort directed toward finding adequate alternatives to detention, juvenile court processes and institutionalization
- ✓ Diversion of juveniles to community alternatives from the formal judicial process at all levels
- ✓ The consideration of confidentiality in efforts to coordinate services for juveniles
- ✓ Constitutional protections for juveniles equal to those for adults, including due process of law, and protection from invasion of privacy and unwarranted removal from their families (1975)

Sentencing Position Details

Support:

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

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

Natural Resources Issue Positions

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

LWVUS Position: Natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability. Pollution of these resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health. (1986)

Support:

- ✓ Regulation of pollution sources by control and penalties
- ✓ Inspection and monitoring.
- ✓ Full disclosure of pollution data

Incentives to accelerate pollution control; vigorous enforcement mechanisms including sanctions for states and localities that do not comply with federal standards and substantial fines for noncompliance

Air Quality:

LWVMN Position: Support measures to reduce air pollution from vehicular and stationary sources.

- ✓ Support measures to reduce vehicular pollution, including development of more energy-efficient transportation systems.

Energy:

LWVUS Position: LWVUS supports: (1) energy goals and policies that acknowledge the United States as a responsible member of the world community; (2) reducing energy growth rates; (3) using a variety of energy sources with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies; (4) the environmentally sound use of energy resources, with consideration of the entire cycle of energy production; (5) predominant reliance of renewable resources; (6)

policies that limit reliance on nuclear fission; (7) action...to encourage the use of renewable resources and energy conservation; (8) mandatory energy-conservation measures...(9) policies to reduce energy demand and (10) assistance to low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on the poor.

Transportation:

(Based on Natural Resources Position of LWVUS plus the Government Spending position of LWVMN)

LWVUS supports comprehensive long-range planning; wise decision-making requires consideration of environmental, public health, social and economic impacts of proposed plans...

LWVUS Position: energy-efficient and environmentally sound transportation systems should afford better access for housing and jobs...

LWVUS Position: Air Quality: Support measures to reduce vehicular pollution, including...development of more energy-efficient transportation systems.

LWVMN—Government Spending: support maintaining "a viable statewide transportation system, including public transit".

Land Use:

LWVUS Position: Supports (1) management of land as a finite resource not as a commodity since land ownership, whether public or private, carries a responsibility for stewardship; (2) identification and regulation of areas of critical concern... (3) reclamation of lands damaged by surface mining, waste disposal...timber harvesting...and other activities; (4) acquisition of land for public use; (5) review of environmental, social and economic impacts of major public and private developments...

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

Support a state plan that should:

- ✓ Be tied closely to integrated planning (e.g., human services, highways)

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

Water Resources:

LWVUS Position: supports (1) water resource programs and policies that reflect the interrelationships of water quality, water quantity, ground water and surface water and that addresses the potential depletion or pollution of water supplies; (2) measures to reduce water pollution from direct point-source discharges and from indirect nonpoint sources...

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

Support:

- ✓ State water policies which emphasize planning for supply, use and quality, and effective coordination of agencies and levels of government with responsibility for water resources
- ✓ Statewide, comprehensive planning to protect both ground and surface water
- ✓ Policies which:

- Recognize regional differences in supply and use.
 - Integrate both ground and surface water management.
 - Integrate quality and quantity management.
 - Provide for research on hydrogeology and best use of water resources.
 - Consider future use (of water resources).
 - Promote data acquisition to characterize quality and quantity.
 - Provide for maintenance and repair of water facilities.
 - Distinguish between withdrawal and consumption.
- ✓ A state water conservation plan which emphasizes preservation and efficient use of water resources. The plan should, at a minimum:
- Continue to develop the protected stream flow and aquifer-safe yield programs.
 - Provide for education and technical assistance.
 - Require specific conservation plans from those who propose inter-basin transfers.
 - Provide incentives for recycling and reuse.
- ✓ Water-pricing policies which include full costs of production and delivery in water prices, as well as a rate structure which encourage conservation and user fees or taxes to cover costs in state water management
- ✓ Inter-basin transfers (both intrastate and interstate) only if water remaining in the basin would be sufficient for present, future and instream needs; decisions to transfer water should consider environmental effects and conservation practices of the receiving basin
- ✓ Clear legislative definition of the decision-making process for interstate and interbasin transfers, including at least an advisory role for local governments affected by the transfer and a regulatory role for state government. Each of the following options should be considered:
- Minnesota legislation governing interbasin transfers
 - Uniform legislation among Great Lakes states
 - Federal legislation requiring basin-of-origin state approval

- Interstate compacts with authority for transfer decisions
- Increased state and province participation in International Joint Commission procedures

Great Lakes Ecosystem:

LWVMN Position: Supports preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. We support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin. (2013)

Details Protective Measures - Support:

- ✓ Limit uses of "fragile," historical, cultural and scenic shoreline areas.
- ✓ Preserve wild and pristine areas within the watershed, with no new development in these habitats without adherence to federal, state, or local criteria.
- ✓ Provide for appropriate recreational opportunities in and public access to sensitive areas without destruction or harm to the ecosystem.
- ✓ Protect the quality of the air and waters of the ecosystem by strict adherence to zoning regulations that prohibit the introduction of polluting discharges or detrimental land use techniques.
- ✓ Protect the remaining dune formations. Enforce strict regulations of sand dune mining or development on the dunes.
- ✓ Strengthen upstream land management to eliminate sources of siltation and pollution.
- ✓ Control the invasion and spread of non-native aquatic and terrestrial nuisance species.

Threats to the Ecosystem - Oppose:

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

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

Public Participation – Support:

- ✓ Informed and responsible action on behalf of the preservation of the Great Lakes Ecosystem.
- ✓ Relevant information should be readily available to the public.
- ✓ Opportunities for public input should be timely, accessible, convenient and well-advertised.

Role of Government – Support:

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

Research Priorities:

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

Solid Waste:

LWVMN Position: Support measures to reduce generation of solid waste and ensure safe treatment, storage and disposal of all wastes.

Support:

- ✓ State governments taking measures to reduce the generation of municipal solid waste through research and development of alternatives to sanitary landfills
- ✓ Measures to discourage the use of nonreturnable beverage containers
- ✓ Flexibility in the establishment and enforcement of standards in solid waste management to allow the state to adopt more stringent standards than federal standards (1973)

Agriculture:

LWVUS Position: Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

LWVMN Position: Support a system of sustainable agricultural production which provides safe, healthful food and which preserves and protects the state's human and natural agricultural resources and enhances the environment; research and technical assistance in farming practices and rural economies that improve the economic

viability of family farms, environmental health, and the quality of life of family farmers and their communities.

Support:

- ✓ Family-owned, moderate- and small-sized farms
- ✓ Research directed to moderate- and small-sized farm operations
- ✓ Beginning farmers
- ✓ Innovative practices and crops for moderate- and small-sized farms
- ✓ Access to markets for all producers
- ✓ Providing crisis supports based on need (crisis understood to be an event beyond the farmer's control such as a natural disaster)
- ✓ Monitoring contracts for the protection of farmer.
- ✓ Ensuring that corporate farms be held liable for their share of losses, environmental damage, public health hazards, et.
- ✓ Incentives for sustainable farming practices
- ✓ Incentives for contributions to clean water and air, healthy soil and conservation of wildlife
- ✓ Incentives for the preservation of agricultural land
- ✓ Shared liability for environmental damage (caused by agriculture) between farmers and businesses under contract
- ✓ Stricter standards for animal confinement operations (based on concerns for both animals and human health as well as ethical issues relating to the treatment of animals)

In order to promote the stability of rural communities, Support:

- ✓ Community and regional planning
- ✓ Education (retraining, farm management, marketing, etc.)
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Livable wages for workers
- ✓ Crisis assistance
- ✓ Development of leadership skills

- ✓ Networking with farmers and community leaders
- ✓ Research into viable and sustainable rural communities
- ✓ Promoting exports as long as this does not hold priority over promotion of a local/regional food system
- ✓ Research into genetically modified foods is supported if the purpose of such research is to ensure the long-term safety of GMO food and crops, to advance basic research knowledge, to benefit sustainable agricultural practices and to serve the public good.

Note on terms used: “Family farm” generally implies that the family owns and lives on the land, provides most of the labor, assumes the economic risk, and makes management decisions. According to the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, sustainable agriculture seeks to balance three long-term goals: quality of life (to satisfy personal, family, and community needs for health, safety, food and happiness); environment (to enhance finite soil, water, air and other resources; economics (to be profitable). In any given situation, the most sustainable choice is the one where the net effects come closest to meeting all three goals.

Social Policy Issue Positions

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

Equal Opportunity:

LWVUS Position: Support equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the U.S. regardless of their race, color, gender, religions, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Support the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. [Expanded position includes educational programs, employment and Fair Housing criteria.] (Revised 1989 - original position 1969)

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

Support:

- ✓ The principle that the state is responsible for all its citizens on an equal basis and should work to ensure equal treatment for all citizens by all levels of government (1951)
- ✓ Antidiscrimination legislation as a necessary means of eliminating discrimination (1957)
- ✓ The principle of fair housing and antidiscrimination laws governing transactions of all real property, regardless of whether the financing is public or private (1961)
- ✓ Adequately financed enforcement of antidiscrimination laws dealing with employment, housing, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services (1961)
- ✓ State legislation to ensure services for American Indian citizens which are equal to those provided for other citizens. Where American Indians are singled out for special attention, that attention should be directed towards

solving existing jurisdictional conflicts in order to guarantee equal treatment of American Indian citizens by all levels of government. Programs should have the explicit recognition that the basic decisions regarding American Indian lives and property are to be made by the American Indians themselves (1963)

- ✓ A state agency of American Indian affairs which meets the following criteria: acceptable to the American Indians themselves; permanent; staffed by professionally qualified people, authorized to act in setting up, carrying out and coordinating programs; empowered to use the services of other existing agencies and provided with adequate funds (1963)
- ✓ The correction of racial imbalance in the schools (1967)
- ✓ Life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens (Convention 1983)

Housing:

LWVMN Position: All people have a right to housing. The public and private sectors should work together to ensure that everyone has access to adequate, decent, affordable housing.

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

- ✓ Increase a community's capacity to provide a full range of housing opportunities
- ✓ Preserve and expand the existing affordable housing stock
- ✓ Prevent homelessness
- ✓ Promote rental housing subsidies

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

- ✓ Narrow the tax disparity between rental and owner occupied residential property
- ✓ Reduce the tax rate on rental residential property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households
- ✓ Encourage maintenance of rental property available to very low-, low- and moderate- income households

Health Care:

LWVUS Position: A basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care... LWVUS favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums. (1993) (See Impact on Issues for full position.)

Child Health:

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

Support:

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

Teenage Pregnancy:

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

Support:

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

Alcohol and Tobacco Use:

LWVMN Position: LWVMN supports educational programs that advance improved chemical health.

Support:

- ✓ Ongoing programs, starting in the elementary school and continuing in the middle and high school
- ✓ Regular, continuing education for adult educators, coaches and school administrators
- ✓ Alternatives to suspension for alcohol and tobacco violations in the schools
- ✓ Allocation of public funds for state and community initiatives to prevent illegal alcohol and tobacco use
- ✓ Consistent city and school guidelines for adults who chaperone youth activities
- ✓ State laws, city ordinances and law enforcement efforts designed to promote chemical health and reduce illegal alcohol and tobacco use (Convention 1999)

Mental Health:

LWVMN Position: Support a comprehensive and coordinated system of programs and services for mentally ill adults and emotionally disturbed children and adolescents (hereafter referred to as “persons with mental illness”). Priority should be given to persons with serious and persistent mental illness and/or acute mental illness. Minnesota public policy and funding should sustain an array of community

based services which are available and accessible to persons with mental illness. Administration of that policy should provide clients with appropriate and adequate services. (1989)

Support:

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

Child Care:

LWVUS Position: Support programs, services and policies at all levels of government to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it, in order to increase access to employment and to prevent and reduce poverty. (1988, based on positions 1969-1988)

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

Support:

- ✓ Adequate funding of a child care sliding fee program to ensure quality child care for low income children

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

Family and Child Issues:

LWVUS Position: Early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include:

- ✓ child abuse/neglect prevention
- ✓ quality healthcare, including nutrition and prenatal care
- ✓ early childhood education
- ✓ developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3
- ✓ family support services
- ✓ violence prevention (1994)

Prevention of Violence:

LWVUS Position: Support violence prevention programs in all communities.

LWVMN Position: Support violence prevention programs in our community. (1994)

Support:

- ✓ Educational programs that emphasize self-esteem, healthy sexuality, problem solving, positive expression of emotions, non-violent conflict resolution and respect for others to prevent violent behavior. This includes support for:
 - Government sponsored parenting and early childhood classes

- Local or state government mandating or encouraging such education programs in school curricula
 - Use of public money to train teachers and administrators to use non-violence curricula;
 - Training for child care providers
- ✓ A requirement that adult educators, including coaches, participate in prevention of sexual harassment and violence education programs, and that public money be provided for adequate training
 - ✓ The use of public money for a statewide public information and communication campaign designed to prevent violent and sexually violent behavior; i.e., to promote healthy sexuality, non-violent conflict resolution, and gender and racial equality
 - ✓ Efforts of state and local government to develop and coordinate programs dealing with primary prevention of violence
 - ✓ Allocation of public moneys in governmental programs to combat violence through reducing substance abuse and poverty, and by identifying and responding to individuals who have been violent or are at risk for violent behavior
 - ✓ The following social institutions taking an active role in preventing violent behavior: religion, business, law, medicine, media, civic and recreational organizations
 - ✓ Efforts to encourage the media industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of violence
 - ✓ Efforts to encourage the pornography industry to exercise self-restraint in the promotion of sexually-violent pornography

Family Violence:

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

Support:

- ✓ A multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with child abuse

- ✓ More advocates to protect the interests of victims of family violence
- ✓ More shelters for battered women
- ✓ A complete and continuing system of data collection on incidents of family violence to aid in planning and evaluation of services
- ✓ A continuing program of mediation as an alternative to criminal prosecution in resolving domestic disputes
- ✓ Provision of immediate legal remedies for victims of family violence
- ✓ A coordinated training program for all legal and human services professionals to address the problems of family violence (1980)

Child Support:

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

Support:

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

Child Protection:

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

Support of :

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

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

Immigration:

LWVUS Position: Immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises.

Provisions should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law. (2008)

LWVMN Position: LWVMN supports incorporating immigrants into our communities by providing access to education, by endorsing the development of secure identification documents, and by respecting the right of law enforcement personnel to perform their duties without the burden of interpreting federal immigration policies.

Oppose residents with legal immigrant status running for local office.

Support :

- ✓ Federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S
- ✓ Federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations
- ✓ Provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status as a transitional step
- ✓ Federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations
- ✓ State funding of Adult Basic Education for each program site adequate to meet the needs of the eligible residents
- ✓ In-state tuition at state colleges and universities under the same conditions for all Minnesota residents

- ✓ Recognition by the Department of Public Safety of the matricula consular as an acceptable document to prove identity for obtaining a driver's license.

Oppose:

- ✓ Requiring law enforcement employees of state, county, or local government agencies, to be deputized by the INS to enforce immigration laws
- ✓ Allowing residents with legal immigrant status to run for local offices (As adopted by the LWVMN Board, March, 2003)

Firearms:

LWVUS Position: Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons, and support the allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers. (1990, 1994, 1998)

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

Support:

- ✓ Licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- ✓ Registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- ✓ A background check for the purchase of long guns, handguns and assault weapons
- ✓ A ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts
- ✓ Mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm
- ✓ The concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence
- ✓ Stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms
- ✓ The ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows

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

Education Issue Positions

Secure equal educational opportunities for all Minnesota children.

Equal Opportunity:

LWVMN Position: Support increased state responsibility in creating equal public educational opportunities for all Minnesota children through measures to correct racial imbalance. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

LWVMN Position: Support policies to ensure equal opportunity in employment, real property, public accommodations, education and other public services for all persons.

Support:

- ✓ Correction of racial imbalance in the schools. The state should have the power to investigate, to set and enforce standards, and to give extra financial help to achieve these standards (1967)
- ✓ Life-long access to public education for expanded job opportunities and personal enrichment to achieve education equity for all citizens (Convention 1983) (see Social Policy section)

Financing of Education:

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

Support:

- ✓ The concept of the foundation formula program (general education revenue). Any revisions in the current education financing system should support:
 - Provision of adequate funding to meet the real costs of education (1983)
 - The continuation of local excess referendum levies to raise additional money from property taxes until the State of Minnesota can ensure

consistent and adequate funding of education throughout the state (1991)

- State funding of the following cost differences among students: pupil unit weighting, poverty, special education, including gifted and language differences (ESL and LEP) (1991)
- State funding of the following cost differences among school districts: scarcity, training and experience, desegregation and transportation (1991)
- Using the income tax as the mainstay of school funding (1983)
- Encouraging financial efficiencies (1983)
- Requiring school districts to raise money from property taxes for building construction and debt service with local bond referendum levies approved by the state Department of Education (1991)
- Allowing local districts to raise a limited amount of additional funds for supplemental programs through local levies, to maintain local choice and ensure local accountability (1983)
- Reorganization of school districts with extremely low enrollments (1983)
- The gradual phasing out of supplemental revenue (1991)
- Maintaining most social and recreational services now offered at schools but seek alternative funding sources for many (1983)

Oppose:

- ✓ Continuation of the current Minnesota private school tuition tax deduction (1983)
- ✓ State funding of cost of living differences between districts (1991)

Collective Bargaining and Tenure:

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

Support:

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

LWVMN opposes extension of the right to strike.

LWVMN opposes mandatory negotiation of procedures for reducing staff.

Library Funding:

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

Support:

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

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

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues

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

Metropolitan Council:

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

CMAL supports:

- ✓ Retention of an appointed Metropolitan Council
- ✓ The appointed Council is seen as less parochial, less subject to special interests, and better able to adopt and maintain unpopular positions for the good of the entire area
- ✓ The appointed Council is responsible to our elected state Legislature and watched over by our elected local officials (1969, 1976, 1993)
- ✓ An open appointment process including publicized vacancies; increased citizen, local government and legislative influence on appointments; formal qualifications for office, a return to fixed, staggered terms, establishment of a

removal procedure for members of the Council and district apportionment based on population

If it appears that the Council may become an elected body, CMAL supports :

- ✓ Nonpartisan candidates
- ✓ Availability of public financing
- ✓ Selection of the chair made by the council members from among their number
- ✓ Maintaining population as the basis for districts
- ✓ Election of Council members at the same time as local officials (assuming passage of the Uniform Election Law)
- ✓ Continuation of a part-time Council and of the per diem basis for compensation (1976, 1993)

Housing:

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

Health:

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

Funding/Financing Fiscal Disparities:

CMAL Position: Support area-wide sharing of fiscal resources, to move toward the solution of problems created by fiscal disparities and to finance services which benefit the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area as a whole or affect the lives of all its citizens. (1970) The integrity of the area-wide pool used in the sharing of fiscal resources should be maintained with no exceptions. (1997) Loans from the pool should be discouraged and if made should not be forgiven. (1997)

Financing Metropolitan Services:

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

CMAL supports:

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

School Integration/Desegregation:

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

Housing/Health Care for the Aging:

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

CMAL supports:

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

Land Use and Environmental Quality:

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

CMAL supports:

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

Environment:

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

CMAL Position: Support the Metropolitan Council as the agency to plan and coordinate the water supply needs of the region. (1995)

CMAL supports:

- ✓ Water supply as a regional system with Metropolitan Council review and approval of local plans and implementation of the water supply system through local water utilities
- ✓ Consideration of water supply availability in shaping the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and the Metropolitan Council should have the authority to deny approval of development in areas with limited water supply availability through approval of amendments to land use plans
- ✓ Protection of water supply resource, emergency response, and water conservation as high priorities in a regional water supply plan with plans for alternative sources of water a slightly lower priority
- ✓ Water supply becoming a regional operating system only if implementation of local water supply plans is ineffective and threatens the water supply of the region, or major regional investments are needed for interconnections to provide for the water supply of the region, and/or if supplies of water must be brought in from outside the region
- ✓ Metropolitan Council having a role in educating the public.

Solid Waste:

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

Transportation:

CMAL Position: Support the Metropolitan Council as the single metropolitan agency planning and coordinating a diverse transportation system, meeting varied needs, and having approval authority over this system's major capital expenditures. New funding sources should be service related. (1983) (Also see LWVUS position in Impact on Issues.)

CMAL supports:

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

County Government:

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

CMAL believes that accountability of a governmental body is obtained by effective communication of its policies and procedures to residents of its jurisdiction. CMAL also recognizes the responsibility of citizens to become adequately informed and involved, and to participate in the election process.

Accountability of county government would be increased in a number of ways, including the following:

- ✓ Public access to the budget process where priorities and policies are set, including citizen review of revenue-sharing allocations and funding for public services and citizen review of methods of setting budget priorities
- ✓ Systematic and objective evaluation of county programs
 - Creation of a public information system to ensure not only public access to meetings of the county board and advisory committees but

also more understanding of the issues being considered by the county board

- Ample publication of location, time, date and agenda of meeting and publication of background information prior to the decision-making time when policy is set
- Dissemination of information on the procedures for citizen appointments
- Regular communication between county and municipalities and other levels of government
- full disclosure of campaign financing by every candidate in county elections

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