

ABOUT



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WHAT IS THE LWV?

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan grassroots political organization open to men and women. It encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The LWV neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for elective office, but does encourage its members as individuals to take part fully in the political process.

The League operates at the local, state, and national levels in every state, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. In Washington State there are 21 local leagues.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE LWV?

The LWV grew out of the suffrage movement. In 1920, after the passage of the 19th amendment, Carrie Chapman Catt who led the battle, organized the League of Women Voters of the United States. The LWV's first goal was to equip women to exercise their new right to vote. Since the 1970's, membership in the LWV has been open to women and men and now men make up a significant part of our membership. Political action based on knowledge gained from study became the cornerstone of the LWV's diverse agenda.

WHAT ARE THE LWV PRINCIPLES?

The LWV believes...

...in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial

...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 which 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 an international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Where Do the Principles Come From?

The Principles are “concepts of government” to which the League subscribes. They are a descendant of the Platform, which served from 1942 to 1956 as the national repository for “...principles supported and positions taken by the League as a whole in fields of government to which it has given sustained attention.” Since then, the Principles have served two functions, according to the LWVUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state, and local programs (Article XII), and 2) a basis for taking action at the national, state, and local levels (Article XII)

The appropriate board authorizes action to implement the Principles once it determines that member understanding and agreement do exist and that action is appropriate. As with other actions, where there are ramifications beyond a League’s own government jurisdiction, that League should consult other Leagues affected.

The National Board suggests that any action on the Principles be taken in conjunction with current League positions to which they apply and on which member agreement and understanding are known to exist. The Principles are rather broad when standing alone, so it is necessary to exercise caution when considering using them as a basis for action. Furthermore, since 1974 most of the Principles have been an integral part of the national program, most notably in the criteria for evaluating government that appear at the end of the summary of public policy positions. (Source: LWVUS)

NONPARTISANSHIP

The League of Women Voters of Snohomish County (LWVSC) is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and, after member study and agreement, works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Though the League is nonpartisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for public office, it is political in that it promotes League-supported public policy issues. The League believes that political parties are essential to our system of government and participation of informed citizens is beneficial to the parties and to the system. Consequently, the League encourages its members as individuals to be active in the political parties, in finding and supporting candidates for public office and in seeking election to public office.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

We will actively work to remove barriers to full participation in this organization regardless of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

HOW IS THE LWV ORGANIZED?

The LWV operates at the local, state, and national levels. Joining at one level automatically makes you a member of the other two levels.

Board of Directors:

Officers are elected at each level of LWV by the membership at annual meetings or conventions.

Directors are elected or appointed per the League's bylaws.

Each board member is responsible for managing the activities of the League as well as for a specific area as agreed between the President and that board member.

LWV POSITIONS ON ISSUES

How the League Takes a Position

The League of Women Voters uses a time-tested method for taking positions on issues. Members study an issue, use local League meetings to develop consensus on the issues raised in the study, and then adopt a written statement of position on the issue, which is approved by the Board.

State & National League Position Statements



PROGRAM
IN
ACTION
2019-2021

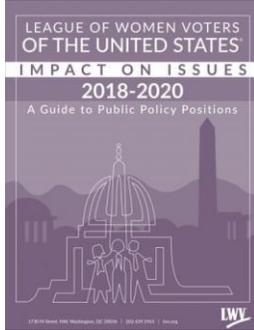
A Leader's Guide
to State Program

Updated November 2018

Washington State: Program in Action 2019-2021 (PDF)

PROGRAM IN ACTION (PIA) is designed to help League Leaders make effective use of LWVWA policy positions. It is a brief summary of studies, consensus and action taken by the League of Women Voters of Washington since the 1920s. League positions are included in their entirety. PIA is updated every two years with additional background material and any new positions

statements.



National League: Impact on Issues 2018-2020 (PDF)

The 2018-2020 edition of the guide to the National League's public policy positions. These positions are updated every two years.

Current LWVSC Position Statements

LWVSC develops **Positions and Programs** which guides its activities. Activities are initiated in or implemented by its three Units and various committees.

May 18, 2019

LWVSC POSITIONS IN BRIEF

For the League of Women Voters, positions are adopted at the national, state, and local levels. Positions are developed by study and then adopted by consensus.

These are the Positions in Brief adopted by the League of Women Voters of Snohomish County.

- **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION** Support of citizen participation in local government by advocating that county and local government branches provide adequate notice of proposed actions, hold open meetings, and make public records readily accessible.
- **CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES** Support of regional planning that reflect conservation of natural resources and which includes citizen participation in planning, zoning, land use, and water management; county and city compliance with the Growth Management Act; and park acquisition and development.
- **ELECTION LAWS AND PROCEDURES** Seeking enforcement of registration laws and election procedures.
- **GOVERNMENT** Promote civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and the public for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutual, respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.

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- **HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING** Support of local efforts to alleviate the housing shortage, including cooperative efforts between private and nonprofit agencies and the housing authorities, to provide low-income housing.
- **JUVENILE SERVICES** Support of measures to maintain effective services by Snohomish County Juvenile Services.
- **MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES** Strong support of measures for adequate funding of prevention and treatment services for persons of all ages and circumstance, including increase in state and federal funding formulas under Medicaid and Medicare, increase in state appropriations for community mental health services and reduction in state and regional administrative overhead, and enactment of full mental health insurance parity legislation at state and federal levels.
- **PORT DISTRICTS** Encouragement of port districts to emphasize environmental values, to coordinate planning, and be accountable to the public.
- **SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT** Support for the solid waste management priorities of Snohomish County in descending order: waste reduction, recycling, and landfill.
- **TRANSPORTATION** Support for a long-term transportation service plan that increases ridership, ensures smooth transfers between modes of transit, provides a quick response to service needs, and is compatible with comprehensive regional planning for transportation that reflect conservation of natural resources.

*Complete Position Statements are posted on the website: www.lwvsnoho/members
The League of Women Voters of Snohomish County A Guide to Program: 1957-2003*

Program of Work, 2020-2021

The members of the League of Women Voters of Snohomish County approved the following issues of public policy for the Program Year 2020-2021. Each of these proposals meets the criteria for a Program, having a defined focus and outcome, a specific timeline, and a sponsoring committee dedicated to the work.

Children's Services Committee

The committee has completed its "Study of Homelessness Children, Youth and Families in Snohomish County" and plans to expand the LWVSC position on the issue for discussion and possible consensus.

Civil Discourse Committee

Has created and plans to distribute a civil discourse brochure. Plans a collaboration with Braver Angels to host a workshop when scheduling can be properly coordinated. The workshop will teach skills for having respectful conversations.

Census/Redistricting Committee

The committee plans to hold "Speak Up Schools" in early 2021 to train people to testify effectively at Redistricting hearings. This work is part of a state-wide initiative.

Diversity Outreach Committee

Continues progress on and expects to complete through Phase III of the Applied DEI Discovery Pilot Project to discover our League culture and share the results within the League and with our community partners.

ACTIVE COMMITTEES

Committees working on Position issues include:

- **Centennial Committee** – will continue to educate and celebrate 100 years of women getting the vote and establishment of the League. They will also complete work on the grants that were awarded to supplement the aim of celebrating this important milestone in our history.
- **Healthcare** – will focus on women’s health issues, the opioid crisis, behavioral health, and health costs. The Health Care committee is also looking at single payer and the effect of hospitals being owned by religious organizations.
- **Natural Resources** – The Committee is continuing research on tree canopy retention as a health and environmental benefit, as well as a carbon sequestration mitigation for climate change. They plan to hold a forum on the Climate Change Emergency at the Adopt-a-Stream Foundation on October 24th, 2020 (Of course dependent on any resurgence of Covid-19). After this forum, they will support Climate Change Conversations initiative at various locations throughout the County.
- **Transportation** – will continue to keep us informed about transportation plans for Snohomish County, legislative bills re. transportation, and the impact of I-976.

OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES

Action and Legislative Issues

Budget

By-Laws

Membership

Nominating

Observer Corps

Program

Voter Services -Includes the sub-committee Get Out the Vote (GOTV).

Communications- Includes Facebook, Radio, Publicity, TRY (They Represent You), Voter, Website, Twitter, and Action Alerts.

MEMBERSHIP

The League is open to any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League. League membership provides extensive information about the issues of the day, opportunities for thoughtful dialogue with other men and women interested in current events, an opportunity to support democracy, the chance to be part of consensus decisions on League positions, and be part of one of the most trusted organizations in the US.

Voting Members

Persons who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues, and of the LWVUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.



There are over 90,000 members of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS). There are Leagues in every state, Puerto Rico, Washington, DC. and the Virgin Islands.

Member Involvement

The level of your involvement is up to you. We invite you to be involved to get the most that the League has to offer and to form lifelong friendships! Some members support League activities with their dues alone. Some members attend meetings regularly. Busy members often volunteer for projects that are short term or that can be completed on their time schedule.

Speaking on behalf of the League makes an important public statement. For that reason, any information shared by LWVSC must be coordinated with and approved by the President. This policy applies to all statements or opinions expressed in public meetings, letters to the editor or to public officials, lobbying efforts, testimony in government hearings and to elected officials, and on social media.

The LWVSC encourages all forms of civic participation outside of League. Members may certainly engage as individuals on other occasions where no League alignment is sought, and no League insignia is worn.

LWVSC offers many opportunities to get involved at the local, state, or even national level, depending on your interest and time commitments. Please let us know how we can help each other!

HOW DOES LEAGUE FINANCE ITS ACTIVITIES?

The League is a non-profit organization that relies heavily on dues and contributions to operate and to achieve its goals. Support comes from members, nonmembers and the community.

Each local LWV decides the amount of its dues. From its funds, the local LWV pays a Per-Member-Payment (PMP) to support national and state Leagues.

Since the League is a lobbying organization defined by the IRS as 501(c)(4), advocacy activities and League membership dues are not tax-deductible.

The LWVSC Education Fund, however, is designated as an IRS 501(c)(3), and contributions qualify as tax-deductible since those funds are used exclusively for education. LWVSC encourages all League members and friends to consider donating to the LWVSC Education Fund so that their contribution directly supports our community work and education in Snohomish County.

League of Women Voters Glossary

This page lists many specific terms, or “League lingo,” that are unique to the League of Women Voters. Updated 12.31.2019.

- action:** Promoting the League’s positions on local, state, and national public policy issues to government officials, the media, and the public.
- action alert:** A request from the LWVUS or LWVWA sent to members to take action in support of a League position. LWVUS also sends action alerts to LWVWA.
- advocacy:** Recommending public support for a particular issue or policy.
- annual meeting:** Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes, and adopt a budget and program of work for the following year. The League’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Local Leagues hold meetings annually. At the state level this occurs either at the state convention on odd-numbered years or at council meetings on even-numbered years and conducts similar business for the next biennium.
- associate member:** A nonvoting member of the League, such as a person under 16 years of age.
- ballot issues:** Policy items (such as initiatives, referenda, or constitutional amendments) placed on ballot for a vote of the people. LWVWA makes support or opposition statements on those issues where policy positions exist. LWVWA also produces ballot summaries that describe the ballot measure along with pros and cons. The League’s objective information on ballot issues comes separately from the Education Fund (the C3) and the League’s advocacy arm (the C4). LWVWA does not combine the two in either documents or events.
- Board of Directors:** The governing body of the League (national, state, or local), who are typically elected as a group at the annual meeting. The nominating committee presents a slate of directors and officers who have been vetted (evaluated) for service. The League has an Education Fund 501(c)(3) and a 501(c)(4) board, both nonprofit, and usually include many of the same officers and directors.
- C3:** Refers to a 501(c)(3), which is a nonprofit that the IRS has approved as a tax-exempt, charitable organization. This is shorthand for the League of Women Voters of Washington Education Fund, which is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3)—a tax-exempt, charitable organization that provides an umbrella for local Leagues to be able to accept C3 donations. The Education Fund sponsors and supports nonpartisan educational projects that help the public better understand major public policy issues and become active and informed participants in their communities and in their government. These projects include Vote411.org and other voter service projects, the civics textbook *The State We’re In*, and the League’s issue studies and reports.

C4: Refers to a 501(c)(4), which is a tax-exempt social welfare organization that the IRS describes as not organized for profit and which operates exclusively to promote social welfare. The C4 refers to the League of Women Voters of Washington, which is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(4)—a tax-exempt social welfare organization. This organization is responsible for all of the League’s advocacy work, including Action Workshops and lobbying efforts with the state legislature. Donations made to this organization are not tax-deductible. The IRS does not require that a C4 be nonpartisan—it is a League requirement that Leagues are nonpartisan.

caucus: An open meeting to discuss an issue that may or may not lead to presenting a viewpoint, resolution, or motion at a League council meeting or convention.

Centennial: Commemoration of an event that happened a hundred years earlier, specifically commemorating the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

chapter: Do not use this term to refer to a local League.

civil discourse: Engagement in discourse (conversation) intended to enhance understanding. Frequently used with the word civility, and is usually perceived as respectful and nonthreatening.

consensus: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members after objective study of an issue and which represents the membership as a whole. The opinion becomes the basis of a position. It is not a vote and it does not necessarily mean all members agree with everything.

concurrence: Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by another League, study committee, task force, or League board. The membership votes on concurrences at the convention or annual meeting following publication of material to provide members with information about the issue.

convention: A state or national League meeting. Local Leagues send delegates to the annual LWVUS and/or LWVWA convention to elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt programs, make bylaw changes, and adopt a budget. Local Leagues send delegates to the state convention in odd-numbered years, and local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention in the even-numbered years. Members of the respective Boards of Directors are also delegates. The number of delegates is based on the number of members in each local or state League. Leagues typically pay for delegates to attend.

cosponsor: An organization that works with the League to put on an event.

council: An assembly of League delegates held in alternate years of the state and national conventions to assess program developments. Local Leagues send

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delegates to the state council and state Leagues send delegates to the national council. In addition to delegates, members and guests are welcome to attend the state council, as the council provides training opportunities and encourages networking and the sharing of ideas and actions.

DEI: Abbreviation for diversity, equity, and inclusion. The LWVUS and the state League are committed to DEI. Local, state, and national Leagues have DEI policies and programs for engaging with multiple communities.

delegate: League members designated to represent their group who are informed, but not instructed, about how to vote/advocate at a League convention or council.

Education Fund: The 501(c)(3) tax-exempt arm of national, state, and local Leagues that handles funds to be used only for educational purposes and not for advocacy action on issues.

election tabloid: A paper and online publication for explaining civic information, such as how to vote, election dates, job descriptions of elected officials, and how to learn about issues and candidates. Tabloids are published by the LWVWA Education Fund (usually jointly with another organization) and meant for civic education for all ages.

forum: A public presentation of issues or candidates, typically hosted by the League and which may include others (such as the media) as part of voter education. The [LWVWA](#) and [LWVUS](#) websites provide extensive information on how to stage a forum.

GOTV: Abbreviation for Get Out the Vote. This is a major function of many local Leagues and is designed to encourage all eligible citizens to vote, especially those in underrepresented communities.

honorary life member: A person who has been a League member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

ILO: Abbreviation for Inter-League Organization. This is a group formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area, or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League's scope.

IOI: Abbreviation for [Impact on Issues](#). This is a document that lists all LWVUS positions along with appropriate background information.

issue: The subject of a study.

lobby: Any attempt by individuals or private interest groups to influence the decisions of the legislature or government.

local League: Organization of League members who reside in a specified geographical area. It operates somewhat independently of the state and national Leagues and has its own programs and activities. They are not called chapters. A large League (such as

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in a large metropolitan area) may have smaller groups, called units, based on geography or interests.

LWV lobbyists: Persons in the League who advocate, or lobby, for League positions with government bodies. The League has both contract lobbyists and a Lobby Team. The contract lobbyists are hired specifically to lobby state legislators and provide strategic guidance to the Lobby Team. The Lobby Team is composed of League volunteer lobbyists who advocate for legislation based on League positions that have been adopted after study and consensus or through concurrence.

LWVUS: Abbreviation for the League of Women Voters of the United States.

LWVUS Update: The biweekly newsletter from LWVUS on national League issues. Subscribe on the [national](#) site.

MAL: Abbreviation for member-at-large. This is a League member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

MAL unit: A state-recognized group of members-at-large in an area where there is no local League. Also referred to a Unit-at-Large (UAL).

MELD: Abbreviation for Member Engagement Leadership Development. Five networks of about four local Leagues (called a pod), led by a MELD Coach and joined by a LWVWA board member who meet (virtually) monthly to exchange information and ideas. MELD is an expansion of the LWVUS Membership Leadership Development (MLD) program.

MOU: Abbreviation for memorandum of understanding. A type of agreement between two or more parties that provides the details of an intended common line of action.

nonpartisan policy: The LWVUS policy states that the “League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.” Leagues take positions only on policy items. Each League must adopt a policy that describes how this specifically applies to members of a League’s board.

partner: A person or group that is working with the League on the same activity. On a program, a partner would be a group that jointly plans and executes a program, and is different than a cosponsor.

partisan: A supporter of a party, cause, or person.

PDC: Abbreviation for Public Disclosure Commission. In Washington State, the PDC provides public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates. It also ensures compliance with and enforces state disclosure and campaign finance laws.

PIA: Abbreviation for *Program in Action*. The [LWVWA document](#) that lists all of the LWVWA positions along with appropriate background information.

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plenary: A meeting or session attended by all participants at a conference or assembly.

PMP: Abbreviation for per-member payment. The payments that local Leagues make to LWVWA and LWVUS based on the number of members registered by the end of January each year. Payments are made starting July 1 of the ensuing fiscal year and can be paid quarterly or in full. A local League may make payments to the LWVUS Education Fund from its own Education Fund account for up to 50% of its PMP and receive credit for the PMP.

pod: A subgroup of local Leagues that are part of the MELD network.

position: A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, which is determined through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board, and used as a basis for League action. In applying LWVUS positions to national, state, local, and regional issues, each appropriate League board—depending on the level of action—is responsible for determining whether member understanding and agreement exists and whether the action makes sense in terms of timing, need, and effectiveness. The position statement after board evaluation is the means to allow a League to take action to support or oppose specific legislation, ballot measures, or governmental activities.

principles: Standards and policies supported by the League as a whole for running the League. They constitute the authorization for adopting programs at all levels. Principles are published in two documents, the LWVWA [Program in Action](#) and the LWVUS [Impact on Issues](#).

program Selected governmental issues that League members at the local, state, and national levels choose for study and action (position). Also referred to as Program of Work.

programs: Plans for speakers, discussion, or other activities placed on calendars for League meetings.

resolution: A formal expression of opinion or intention that an organization, legislature, or club makes, usually after voting.

sponsor: An individual or organization that pays some or all of the costs involved in staging an event in return for advertising.

suffragist: Women in the United States who advocated and lobbied for women's right to vote in elections, and who became part of a national organization that believed in campaigning for the right to vote in elections. Prior to 1920, when the 19th Amendment was ratified, women in the United States could not vote in national elections.

suffragette: Term used in the UK to refer to a suffragist. In the United States, it is considered negative and therefore is not used.

supporter: A person or group that approves of and encourages someone or something.

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study: A careful examination and analysis of a question or issue. The [Guide to Effective Studies](#) is available on the LWVWA website to help Leagues create well-researched, nonbiased, and informative studies.

The Voter: The League publication sent once a month to members and supporters with articles about local, state, and some national activities and issues related to LWVWA interests. Members are automatically subscribed to this when they join the LWVUS. LWVWA and most local Leagues publish *The Voter* for their respective organizations. Many local Leagues call their newsletter *The Voter* also.

toolkit: A set of materials used to accomplish a specific project, such as a GOTV campaign or voter registration.

TRY: Abbreviation for *They Represent You*. The TRY is a League's annual directory of elected officials, and is published by the local Leagues.

TWIL: Abbreviation for *This Week in League*. The TWIL is LWVWA's weekly email newsletter sent out three times a month to provide information and updates about local, state, and some national activities and issues. Members are automatically subscribed to this when they join the League and become members of LWVUS.

unit: Subgroups of members within a geographical area that are part of a larger local League. The units allow members to work together at the local level and within their geographical communities. Units may meet at varying times (day, evening, lunch hour) throughout the month.

VOTE411: The League's [website](#) that provides online ballot information about candidates and issues for an election. Candidates and campaigns about certain issues prepare their own statements and those statements are posted as submitted, unedited by LWVWA.

voter's pamphlet: Nonpartisan publication that provides candidate qualifications and information on ballot issues. It is published by local jurisdictions for local races and the Washington Secretary of State for state and federal offices and state ballot measures. LWVWA publishes additional information on state ballot issues.

voter services: Year-round activities that help citizens be politically active and that encourages participation in the political process. Basic voter service activities include registering voters, Get Out the Vote (GOTV) activities, and presenting factual, nonpartisan information about candidates and election issues.

voting members: All individuals who are at least 16 years old who join LWV. A person who joins LWV is a member at the local, state, and national levels.