

**Group 1 -
LWVOR and LWVPDX POSITIONS - PROGRAM PLANNING 2021-2022**

Re: Juvenile justice, police accountability, gun safety

Wednesday, January 20, 2021, at 7 pm

Barbara Ross and Nancy Donovan, co-discussion leaders

LWVOR POSITIONS

Social policy - Adult Corrections

Social policy - Juvenile justice

Social policy - Gun safety

LWVPDX POSITIONS

Police accountability study underway - will be presented in March 2021 Civic Ed

Social policy - Juvenile justice

Portland police bureau

If there is a topic for which there is no LWVUS, LWVOR or LWVPDX position, the League cannot advocate for public policy changes on that topic. If your group believes we need a position on a topic, you may suggest a study or concurrence with a position from another state or local League. A study, restudy or concurrence must be approved by the membership before it is adopted.

You also may suggest forming a LWVPDX Interest Group for topics related to positions about which members want to learn or presenting an educational event on any public policy topic.

LWVOR POSITIONS

Adult and Juvenile Justice

A. Adult Corrections (*LWVOR, 1983*) p. 20

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that a full range of correctional programs should exist for adult offenders.

1. The League strongly favors increased use of alternatives to incarceration where possible.
 - o The League supports alternatives at all stages of the criminal justice process, including but not limited to:
 - a. pre-trial diversions,
 - b. employment and educational programs,
 - c. restitution,
 - d. treatment centers for mental illness and substance abuse.
 - o The League strongly supports community-based programs such as those offered through the Community Corrections Act, especially those which allow inmates to be partially or wholly self-supporting.
2. If more facilities are needed the League favors:
 - o Minimum security regional treatment and/or program focused facilities.
 - o Adequate staffing and program must be part of any facility within the corrections system. Prison programs should provide each inmate with:
 - a. educational and vocational training,
 - b. opportunities for meaningful work, and
 - c. adequate medical and mental health care.
 - o Maximum security prisons are needed for violent criminals judged dangerous to society.
2. The League believes that comprehensive transitional programs are essential for successful completion of rehabilitation for each inmate released or paroled from a correctional facility.
3. The League supports the adoption of sentencing guidelines that set parameters for judges throughout the state in order to reduce disparity in sentencing.
 - o Judges should be responsible for determining the length of sentences.
 - o The League supports continuation of the Parole Board

B. Juvenile Justice (*LWVOR, Adopted March 1981*) p. 30, 31

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes in coordinated planning and implementation of juvenile services.

1. Prevention of juvenile crimes should be a priority in our society. Prevention programs should:
 - Be available from early childhood to adulthood;
 - Involve family, peers, schools, and the community;
 - Make available early diagnosis and treatment for physical, mental, and educational problems;
 - Make available opportunities for all youth to learn responsibility and positive self-images in their own communities; and
 - Make available opportunities for learning parenting skills.
2. Services for juvenile offenders should:
 - Be responsive to the needs of the youth and his or her family;
 - Make diversion programs available prior to entry as well as during involvement in the juvenile justice system;
 - Emphasize community planned and operated programs, including youth restitution programs;
 - Deal with youth offenders in the least restrictive environment;
 - Provide treatment-oriented secure custody;
 - Include appropriate evaluation, treatment, and placement for those already in the system.
3. The League opposes holding juveniles in adult jails. If appropriate alternatives are not available, care must be taken to assure that juveniles are out of sight and sound of incarcerated adults.
4. Status offenders should be diverted from the juvenile justice system whenever possible.
 - The League opposes holding status offenders in jail under any conditions.
 - Social services outside the juvenile justice system should be developed to meet their needs.
 - The juvenile court may be needed to provide help and protection for some youth.
5. Basic standards for juvenile services should rest with the state.
 - Minimal federal standards are acceptable.
 - Local governments should have flexibility for implementing programs consistent with these standards.
6. Funding for Juvenile services should be consistent and dependable from all sources:
 - Local, state, federal, and private;
 - Include parental ability to pay;
 - Any level of government mandating services should provide substantial funding for those services.
7. There should be a uniform statewide data system that provides meaningful and retrievable information while complying with right-to-privacy laws.

Gun Safety (*LWVUS, Amended in 1998*), p. 27

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety. The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification. The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

Police Accountability (new study underway)

Portland Police Bureau (*LWVPDX, 1982*), p.5

The League of Women Voters of Portland believes the primary function of the Portland Police Bureau is the protection of life and property through the just and effective enforcement of the law, including crime prevention programs and strong visibility of the police.

Just and effective enforcement of the law demands good police/community relations. We support the specialized education and training of police personnel in human relations, including the use of specialists from outside the Bureau. The selection and assignment of police personnel should reflect the individual's knowledge of and sensitivity to variations in community needs.

We support citizen involvement in the functioning of the Portland Police Bureau including, but not limited to, budget advisory committees, precinct advisory councils, and citizen advisory groups.

Juvenile Justice (*LWVPDX, 2006*), pp. 30-31

1. The general goals and characteristics of the juvenile justice system should be to:
 - Protect the public.
 - Stress programs for prevention, early intervention and treatment for delinquents and at-risk youth. These programs should provide care, guidance, treatment and control to promote the child's welfare.

- Provide fair and impartial procedures.
 - Promote personal responsibility and accountability for one's delinquent acts.
 - Reform and rehabilitate offenders.
 - Promote swift and decisive intervention.
 - Maintain an open and accountable system.
 - Stress alternatives to detention or incarceration.
2. We believe that mandatory minimum sentencing for a broad range of juvenile crimes is not a desirable goal of the juvenile justice system. The justice system should have some flexibility to consider a youth's family circumstances and personal history. There should be guidelines for sentencing to encourage equal sentences for equal offenses, but these should not be mandatory.
 3. We support the adoption of a "second look" concept for 15- to 17-year-olds convicted of Measure 11 offenses. The purpose of this "second look" should be to encourage rehabilitation. The decision to reduce a sentence should be made in a court hearing before a judge and based on testimony from a panel of professionals acquainted with the case.
 4. Although the over-representation of minorities in the Multnomah County Juvenile Justice system is due in large part to societal problems, we agree with justice officials that the justice system should work to correct this imbalance in the following ways suggested by Krisberg and Austin in their publication *Reinventing Juvenile Justice*:
 - Increase the ethnic balance in law enforcement, probation and court agencies.
 - Require cultural sensitivity training for police, probation officers and judges.
 - Establish drug treatment programs and make them readily available.
 - Create job training and placement programs.
 - Increase involvement of minority communities in police work.
 - Establish family support services in minority communities.
 - Build mentoring programs for at-risk youth.
 5. Services of the justice system, such as parent effectiveness classes, should be extended to family members of youth involved with the justice system. Punishment of parents for the acts of their children should occur only after all other efforts have proved ineffective. An array of possible

penalties in addition to financial fines should be available to provide a flexible response to gaining parental cooperation.

6. Youth under the age of 18 should not be subject to automatic waiver to adult court. Youth under 15 should be assumed incapable of understanding the legal system adequately to stand trial in adult court.

All other juveniles should be evaluated for their competency to stand trial before being turned over to the adult court system.