

# LWVOR Policy and Position Statements

As of 2018

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## Governance

### Campaign Finance Reform

LWVOR uses the LWVUS position on campaign finance reform as the basis for legislative and statewide action. Members adopted the position in 1973 following a study initiated by the 1972 Convention. The League supports measures to “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.”

### Citizen Participation and Access

“The League of Women Voters believes 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.” LWVUS Principles “We must promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.” LWVUS Representative Government position Citizen participation and access are also important parts of LWVOR positions on Land Use and the Judicial System, and LWVUS positions on Campaign Finance, Citizens Right to Know/ Citizen Participation, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, Natural Resources Public Participation, United Nations, and International Relations Trade Policy. Because of these

scattered positions, we collect here our combined history of advocacy for Citizen Participation and Access.

## Civil Discourse

“Promote civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and citizens for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.”

## Constitutional Provisions

Adopted 1963; Revised 1980

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the Oregon Constitution should be a basic framework of state government, free of obsolete material and statutory detail. It should guarantee basic democratic rights to the people of the state by:
  - Providing a bill of rights;
  - Reserving initiative and referendum powers to the people.
2. The Oregon Constitution should provide for a legislative assembly that is:
  - Apportioned on a population basis, under a system that provides flexibility, adequate safeguards and enforcement procedures ensuring reapportionment after every federal census;
  - Adequately salaried with the amount of salary specified by statute;
  - Permitted to meet in annual sessions.
3. The executive branch should be strengthened by provisions:
  - Fixing authority and responsibility in the office of governor. The governor should be given the power to reorganize the administrative functions of the state government subject to legislative review and possible veto;
  - Limiting the number of departments;
  - Granting the power to appoint department heads to the governor with the consent of the Senate;
  - For an item veto and an executive budget;
  - Setting salaries by statute;
  - Allowing no constitutional impairment of the state civil service system.
4. Administrative – Post Audits (concurrence, 1980)
  - Post audits of state and local governments should be conducted in an apolitical manner.
  - The office performing post audit should function independently of the Legislature and the executive department.
  - The office should be given appropriate enforcement tools.

5. The Oregon Constitution should provide for a judicial system uniform in organization and administration with:
  - Full time, legally trained judges paid by the state;
  - Rule-making power vested in the Supreme Court;
  - Mandatory retirement of judges;
  - Judicial appointments that are made by the governor from a slate presented by a judicial nominating committee.
6. The Oregon Constitution should provide for effective local government (1943, 1963) by:
  - Allowing city and county home rule;
  - Reserving to the Legislature authority to provide for local government flexibility to meet future needs.
7. Revision of the constitution in the future should be permitted by use of the constitutional convention, initiative amendment, or legislative amendment.

Statutes, constitutional amendments, and administrative decisions that implement these positions may be supported by the League.

## Individual Liberties

The League's Position: Statement of Position on Individual Liberties, as Announced by National Board, March 1982: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged.

## Economic Development Revenue Bonds

Adopted April 1983

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the authority to issue Economic Development Revenue Bonds by the state, ports, and cities with more than 300,000 population.
  - In issuing Economic Development Revenue Bonds, top priority should be given to those projects which diversify the economy and/or create jobs. However, consideration should also be given to assisting economically depressed areas and attracting industries to locate in Oregon.
  - Possible unfair competition which might result from bond issuance should be examined at the local level.
2. In addition to the Economic Development Revenue Bond program, the League of Women Voters of Oregon supports other state and local economic stimulants such as upgrading education at all levels and exploring various types of financing methods.

## Election Laws

Adopted 1987; Revised 1997

The League of Women Voters of Oregon recognizes that election procedures and voter information are critical elements to an informed and participating electorate.

1. **Registration Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes a variety of practices is necessary to provide the public with adequate information regarding where and how to register, under what circumstances and how to re-register, notice of election dates, and content of the ballot. The League supports:
  - A registration process which is accessible, well publicized and easily understood, as well as easy to implement and administer;
  - Mail-in registration forms which are widely available;
  - Oregon implementation of the National Voter Registration Act which includes registration process training for agency personnel and the designation of additional registration sites;
  - Implementing a statewide centralized registration list;
  - A registration cut-off requirement that does not disenfranchise otherwise qualified voters.
2. **Elections Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes elections should be conducted in a manner which encourages voter participation and supports:
  - No more than four annual, regularly scheduled, election dates;
  - A formula for cost-sharing between the state and the counties for the state portion of the primary and general elections;
  - Evaluating the timing of the Oregon Primary; and
  - Expediting the process for filling vacancies in federal offices.
3. **Voting Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes citizens are entitled to voting procedures which provide ease of ballot access and use and supports:
  - Use of vote-by-mail in all elections. Every effort should be made to preserve ballot secrecy to prevent fraud.
  - Use of the permanent absentee ballot, provided methods and timelines for counting such ballots are improved, unless and until vote-by-mail in all elections is implemented; and
  - Shortening the time between sending out mail ballots and their required return date.
4. **Voter Education Process.** The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports publication and distribution of a state Voters' Pamphlet prior to statewide elections and believes that:
  - The state has an obligation to provide voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices;
  - All ballot measures must be included with official explanatory statements, an official advisory opinion on constitutionality, effects of a "yes" and "no" vote,

- a fiscal impact statement, and summaries of the main arguments for and against the measures;
  - The number of arguments for and against the measures to be included should be limited;
  - The fees charged per page should more clearly reflect the actual costs; and
  - Ballot titles and measures need to be stated in clear, concise language and should avoid confusing negatives.
5. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a mandatory certification procedure for all county chief elections officials

## Election Methods

Adopted 2017

The League of Women Voters of Oregon recognizes that election methods affect how voters participate in our democracy, who can run for office, and who can get elected. Therefore, the League supports election methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement.
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate.
- Are easy to use.
- Are verifiable and auditable.
- Promote access to voting.
- Promote competitive elections.
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting.
- Discourage negative campaigning.
- Prevent political manipulation (e.g. Gerrymandering).
- Are compatible with vote-by-mail elections.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon does not believe that plurality voting is the best method for promoting democratic choice in all circumstances. For single-winner systems, the League supports ranked-choice voting; we do not support range or approval voting. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports election systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that promote stable government, but we do not support systems that protect the two-party system. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative election methods. If an alternative election method is adopted, then funding for startup and voter education should be available. The League of Women Voters of Oregon does not support nonpartisan elections for state legislators. (Previous position) Adopted 2009 The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that any election method should be evaluated on its ability to:

- Promote voter participation.
- Be simple and easy for voters to understand.
- Be verifiable and auditable.
- Promote access to voting.
- Promote competitive elections.
- Prevent political manipulation.
- Be compatible with vote-by-mail elections.

The League supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative election methods, e.g. instant runoff or fusion voting. If a local jurisdiction adopts an alternative election method, that jurisdiction should bear the costs of startup and voter education. Only after experience and evaluation at the local level should the state consider alternative election methods for statewide adoption. The League does not support nonpartisan elections for state legislators.

## Emergency Board

Adopted 1982

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the use of the appointed Emergency Board to provide fiscal adjustment between legislative sessions.

1. The League endorses the practice of naming a majority of the members from the current Ways and Means Committee to the Emergency Board. However, balanced statewide representation should be required.
2. The public should have the right to be heard by the Emergency Board. Its meetings should be publicized in advance and summary agendas should be readily available to the public.
3. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that powers of the board should be reviewed by the Oregon Legislative Assembly. Areas to be reviewed should include:
  - The definition of what constitutes an emergency;
  - The discretionary ability of the board to make policy decisions in a forum where political accountability and public participation are limited.

Since the position was adopted in 1982, opportunities for action have not arisen.

## Fiscal Policy – Tax System

Adopted 1965-66, 1973; Revised 1971, 1973, 1979, 1984, 1992, 1993, 1999; Educational Update 1999\*

1. Evaluating Taxes. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes any tax proposal should be evaluated with regard to its effect on the entire tax structure. The League supports the following criteria for evaluating taxes and tax systems.
  1. A tax system that is based on ability to pay, but that applies a benefits-received principle wherever reasonable and that recognizes the role of social expediency;
  2. A tax system that is equitable, adequate, stable, easy to administer and as simple as possible;
  3. A tax system that takes into account the taxes levied by all levels of government covering the same tax base;
  4. A tax system that is flexible enough to adjust to social and economic changes (e.g., population shifts, development of new industry, demands for more services and changes in business cycles);
  5. A tax system that recognizes the individual's responsibility for government services by providing for broad sharing of the tax burden.
2. Fiscal Responsibility
  1. The League of Women Voters believes local government should have primary responsibility for financing non-school local government. Local services mandated by the state should have state funding.
  2. A tax limitation is justified if it provides safeguards in the regulation of state and local services and economy. A limitation is not desirable if it prevents provision of services, disrupts government functioning, inhibits progress or results in loss of local control.
  3. We believe economy should be achieved by efficiency and responsible administration. If cuts are necessary, preference should be given to cuts based on an established priority of services so that least essential services are reduced or eliminated first.
3. Income Tax. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the income tax as the most equitable means of providing state revenue. The income tax should be progressive, compatible with federal law and should apply to the broadest possible segment of Oregonians.
4. Sales Tax. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the adoption of a sales tax provided:
  1. The rate cannot be increased without approval of the voters;
  2. Regressivity is reduced through:
  3. a tax credit or rebate and
  4. exemptions for items such as food, rent and utilities.
5. Property Tax. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the use of the local property tax for partially financing local government and local services.

## Exemptions to the General Property Tax

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:

1. Social values justify:
  1. exemptions to charitable, educational and benevolent organizations;
  2. exemptions to fraternal organizations only to the extent of actual charity per-formed;
  3. partial exemption of church property with fees to be paid for local government services directly benefiting the property, such as police and fire protection.
  4. Exemptions designed to create a favorable climate for attracting new industry should be competitive with those of other states.
  5. Economic values justify tax deferral and special assessment at less than real market value on farmlands and forest lands.
  6. Eligibility for an exemption should require:
    1. a verified statement of the taxpayer;
    2. proof of income from all individuals seeking an exemption on their home-stead- if eligibility for the exemption is based on income.
  7. Exemption laws should be periodically reexamined to determine whether they are justified.
  8. Exemption of some classes of personal property is justified if a tax on them would be too difficult or costly to administer.
2. School District Financing. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes:
  1. The major portion of the cost of public schools should be borne by the state.
  2. The state should provide sufficient funds to give each child an equal, adequate education.
  3. All specifically state mandated programs should be financed by the state.
  4. Local districts should be allowed funding alternatives to provide educational programs.
  5. Apart from state mandates, local control of the educational programs should be maintained.
  6. A stable state system for financing public schools is crucial for long range planning.
3. Emergency Clause. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports removing the emergency clause restriction on revenue measures. The importance of such measures warrants:
  1. Either more support than a simple majority; or
  2. More signatures than currently required on a petition to refer.

# Initiative, Referendum and Recall Position

Adopted 1988; Revised 1996; Educational Update 2001\*

1. Statute Initiatives. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the constitutional right of Oregon citizens to propose or revise statutes through the direct initiative process. The League supports the following:
  - Requiring a number of valid signatures not less than six (6) percent of the total number of votes cast for all candidates for governor at the last election at which a governor was elected for a term of four years;
  - Requiring more than 25 signatures to file the prospective petition with the Secretary of State;
  - Prohibiting legislative changes to an initiative statute for at least two years from its effective date, except to clarify implementation and to correct errors in form and style;
  - Requiring an advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot. Such opinion should be published in the Voters' Pamphlet;
  - Limiting the time frame for collecting signatures to one year;
  - Optional use of the indirect initiative.
2. Constitutional Initiatives. The League of Women Voters of Oregon discourages amending the Oregon Constitution by the initiative process. If amendments by initiatives are allowed, the League supports the following restrictions:
  - Requiring a number of valid signatures not less than ten (10) percent of the total number of votes cast for all candidates for governor at the last election at which a governor was elected for a term of four years;
  - Requiring more than 25 signatures to file the prospective petition with the Secretary of State;
  - Establishing a formula for a geographic distribution of signatures in order to reflect statewide interest in a measure;
  - Requiring an advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot. Such opinion should be published in the Voters' Pamphlet;
  - Limiting the time frame for collecting signatures to one year;
  - Requiring more than a simple majority of the total votes cast for the measure for passage;
  - Exempting the Oregon Bill of Rights and revenue measures from the initiative process; and
  - Using the indirect initiative process and scheduling discussion of a qualified initiative first on the agenda of the next legislative session.
3. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the Oregon petition referendum process as provided in the Oregon Constitution.

4. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the recall process as provided in the Oregon Constitution.
5. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that ballot titles should be stated in clear, concise language and should avoid confusing negatives.
6. The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes paying petition circulators by the signature. Paid petitioners must be required to identify themselves as such, personally and on the signature sheets. With reasonable restrictions, petitioners should be allowed to collect signatures in highly visible privately and publicly owned locations.
7. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports publication and distribution of a state Voters' Pamphlet prior to statewide elections and believes that:
  - The state has an obligation to provide the voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices;
  - All ballot measures must be included with official explanatory statements, an official advisory opinion on constitutionality, effects of a “yes” and “no” vote, and summaries of the main arguments for and against the measures;
  - The number of arguments for and against the measures to be included should be limited; and
  - The fees charged per page should more clearly reflect the actual costs.

\*Updated in 2001 for background information only – no position change.

## Oregon State Courts

Adopted 1979, 2007

The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms:

- The separation of powers provided in Article III, Section 1 of the Oregon Constitution;
- The treatment of the Oregon Judicial Department, the third branch of our state government, as a separate, independent, co-equal branch of state government.

The League believes that:

- The State of Oregon should provide access to its courts that meets the diverse needs of all people who use the state courts.
- Judges must be free to decide cases based upon the facts of the particular case and the applicable law, independent of the influence of public opinion and political and partisan pressures.

In order to improve the budget process and funding for the Oregon Judicial Department, the League supports:

- Adequate and stable funding to perform the Department's core functions and critical services;
- Funding by the Legislature of mandated programs or procedures for the state courts;
- An independent compensation commission to set judicial compensation of state court judges.

The state should ensure that counties are able to provide adequate court facilities, maintenance of those facilities, and security equipment and services. The League believes that the following criteria should be used in evaluating a system of selecting judges in Oregon. The system should:

- Be as free from political influence as possible;
- Encourage and attract the most competent and experienced people;
- Include a method of evaluating judges and judicial candidates.

To preserve judicial impartiality and fairness and to protect the public's perception of this impartiality and fairness, the League believes that efforts to obtain campaign finance reform in Oregon should include the financing of judicial campaigns. The League supports alternative dispute resolution (ADR) programs (such as arbitration, mediation, and settlement conferences) as a way to resolve disputes in appropriate cases, recognizing that, in some cases, a trial will be necessary. In order to operate effective ADR programs, Oregon's courts should, at a minimum, have:

- Adequate facilities in which to conduct mediation and arbitration processes;
- Availability of trained and qualified arbitrators and mediators;
- Financial assistance for those unable to afford access to ADR;
- Adequate and stable funding.

The League encourages the development of specialty courts (such as commercial court) and problem-solving courts (such as drug and mental health courts) within the Oregon Judicial Department. In order to operate effective specialty and problem-solving courts, Oregon's courts need:

- Adequate court staff;
- Facilities in which to hold hearings;
- Availability of service providers and outpatient and residential treatment;
- Adequate and stable funding.

## Redistricting

Adopted 2007

Congressional and legislative redistricting should advance the fundamental purposes of representative democracy and a republican form of government by affording the people a meaningful choice in electing their representatives and holding the government accountable to the people. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the Oregon legislative and congressional redistricting system should be efficient, adequately funded, based on well-defined criteria, subject to a reasonable and effective timetable, and have an open and public process.

1. Any redistricting plan should assure that voters are effectively able to hold their public officials accountable, responsible, and responsive, and be based on the following criteria:

1. Adhere to all federal constitutional and legal requirements, such as that every district should have equal population, be contiguous, and meet the requirements of the Voting Rights Act;
2. Promote competitiveness and partisan fairness;
3. Consider other criteria, such as respect for political subdivisions, communities of interest, and geographic barriers.
4. Any redistricting plan should be developed independently of the Legislature in a nonpartisan manner with substantial public input. The Legislature may be afforded an opportunity to review the plan and accept or reject it.
5. The Oregon Supreme Court should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the criteria have not been met.
6. Oregon should conduct redistricting only once during each decade following the federal census.

## Natural Resources

### National Position

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that 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.

### Agriculture

National Position: Statement of Position on Federal Agriculture Policy, as Announced by National Board, October 1988: The LWVUS believes that federal agriculture policies should promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers, farms that are economically viable, farm practices that are environmentally sound and increased reliance on the free market to determine prices.

**SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE.** Federal policy should encourage a system of sustainable, regenerative agricultural production that moves toward an environmentally sound agricultural sector. This includes promoting stewardship to preserve and protect the country's human and natural agricultural resources.

**RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.** Agricultural research, development and technical assistance should continue to be a major federal function. Resources should be targeted to developing sustainable agricultural practices and addressing the needs of mid-size farms.

AGRICULTURAL PRICES. The LWVUS supports an increasing reliance on the free market to determine the price of agricultural commodities and the production decisions of farmers, in preference to traditional price support mechanisms.

AGRICULTURE AND TRADE. U.S. efforts should be directed toward expanding export markets for our agricultural products while minimizing negative effects on developing nations' economies. Consistent with the League's trade position, multilateral trade negotiations should be used to reduce other countries' barriers and/or subsidies protecting their agricultural products.

FARM CREDIT. Farmers should have access to credit with reasonable terms and conditions. Federally provided farm credit is essential to maintaining the viability of farm operations when the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the credit farmers need. Of these policies, the League believes the most essential for the future of agriculture are: encouraging sustainable agriculture; providing research, information and technical assistance to agricultural producers; and increasing reliance on the free market to determine prices.

## Air Quality

Adopted May 1968 The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all segments of society (government, industry, agriculture and individual citizens) must share responsibility for improved air pollution abatement practices.

1. In more specific terms, the League supports:
  - Adequate standards for control of all sources of pollution and strict enforcement of established rules and regulations;
  - A comprehensive, coordinated program for management of air as a natural resource;
  - Adequate financing for air pollution abatement programs;
  - More research to determine causes and effects of air pollution and methods of control, better coordination of research programs, and increased sharing of information.
2. League agrees:
  - Individuals, too, must recognize their responsibility in abatement programs and be willing to accept restrictions on their own activities, particularly with respect to automobiles and backyard burning.
  - Effective public education programs are necessary if the public is to:
    1. recognize the seriousness of the problem; and

2. appreciate the necessity to support improved pollution abatement.
- In general, industry must be prepared to pay the cost of abatement for its own pollution, but members recognize the usefulness of some form of financial incentives:
  1. to assist small or distressed industries; and
  2. to prevent undue delay in obtaining relief from pollution.
  3. The members prefer loans and direct grants over forms of tax relief.
- Polluters should bear the cost of pollution abatement in proportion to their contribution to the problem. (Actually everyone will pay, whether in taxes, in product cost, or in bearing the consequence of inadequate pollution abatement.)
3. In considering Oregon's relationship with other governmental units, League concludes:
  - Because both the desirable air quality and the problems of pollution vary from one area to another:
    1. The state has a right to set higher standards for pollution than those set by the federal government.
    2. The state has a responsibility to set higher standards for pollution when local conditions demand it.
    3. Federal standards in all cases should be recognized as a minimum below which state standards cannot be set.
  - As air pollution does not recognize state boundaries, participation in interstate compacts is desirable in order to control pollution on an airshed basis.

## Climate Change

National Position Climate Change: LWVUS supports a price on carbon emissions that will increase in stages, as part of an overall program to improve energy efficiency and to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy, fast enough to avoid serious damage to the climate system.

*Revised June 5, 2016: LWVUS supports aggressive efforts to restore balance to the planet's climate systems by reducing the atmospheric carbon dioxide to 350 parts per million (ppm), the upper safe limit. The target set by scientists requires an immediate 8% global greenhouse gas emissions annually; in conjunction with carbon dioxide storage through mass reforestation, and soil management. Further, we support transitioning off of fossil fuels to alternative forms of energy: wind, hydroelectric, wave, tidal, geothermal, and solar; and prioritizing a just transition to all Americans. In 2016, LWVUS passed 3 resolutions: LWVUS consider signing onto an Amicus Brief with the 21 youth plaintiffs from Our Children's Trust; LWVUS support the United States ratification of the UN COP 21 Paris Agreement; LWVUS should continue working for full implementation of the EPA Clean Power Plan, especially at the state level, as a first step, and should call on the White House to implement an updated science-based Climate Action Plan that stabilizes global warming by bringing CO2 levels down to no more than 350 ppm by 2100.*

## Offshore and Coastal Management

Adopted May 1990, 2013 The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes responsible and responsive government management of the public's coastal and nearshore natural resources shall be based upon:

1. A complete environmental assessment, cumulative impact analysis, and baseline data specific to Oregon.
2. Recognition of coastal states and local government's rights, jurisdictions, and responsibilities to preserve and protect marine and coastal environment and economy.

Federal government's offshore activities must be consistent with Oregon's approved Coastal Zone Management Plan. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports uniformity of regulations governing the coastal management zone, with opportunity for public input. Jurisdictions should have the ability to enhance regulations to better address local conditions. The League supports the development and maintenance of local comprehensive plans and development codes. Funding should be adequate for effective management and enforcement and should come from a variety of sources. The League opposes any revision, interpretation, or application of Oregon's established marine policy that would diminish Land Conservation and Development Commission Goal 19's strong environmental and natural resources conservation policy giving clear priority to long-term renewable resource uses. The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes oil and gas exploration and development within the state's territorial sea, and requests the state to oppose any federal lease sales within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. The ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of Oregon's ocean water must be protected. The League of Women Voters of Oregon opposes exploration and development of marine minerals within the state's territorial sea. The League supports academic research that would not adversely affect the ecological integrity, renewable natural resources, and beneficial uses of the state's territorial sea. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a state policy that calls on the federal government to ban the exploration and development of marine minerals with the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off the Oregon coast. Should a ban not be effected, the following must be required:

1. An unbiased, credible scientific E.I.S. should be completed prior to any offshore mineral exploration or recovery operation.
2. Offshore mineral activities should be evaluated for degradation of the marine environment, risk to ocean fisheries, and coastal erosion problems.
3. A complete socioeconomic impact statement of offshore developments effect on the states and coastal economy should be made.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon affirms the public's right to be completely informed, actively involved and assured the opportunity to participate in decisions about offshore exploration and development, as well as onshore facilities that support offshore development. The League of Women Voters of Oregon endorses adequate industry-financed oil spill contingency funds, compensation funds, and company bonding for marine mineral mining activities to cover claims for damage caused by their operations, onshore support facilities, and transporting vessels. Governments and other claimants should be reimbursed for, but not limited to, the following:

1. Oil spill clean-up costs.
2. Loss of natural resources or loss of use of natural resources.
3. Impairment of earning capacity.
4. Damage to real or personal property and personal injury.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a policy which allows the state to terminate or modify a lease for environmental endangerment or for public safety within the state's territorial sea. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the creation and operation of marine reserves and protected areas on the Oregon Coast. Siting and management of reserves should reflect a variety of factors, including habitat, species diversity, fisheries and tourism, with sound science being the most critical. The reserves should have identified goals, and continuous funding should come from multiple sources. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports active research into ocean energy technologies. Research should incorporate evaluation of impacts on marine habitats and the coastal economy. Funding should be from multiple sources. Commercial deployment should be allowed only after adequate scientific research is completed and regulations have been adopted. Monitoring should be ongoing with necessary actions and modifications taken to protect the marine environment. Commercial operations should agree to bear the cost of remediating and restoring any environmental damage. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports actions to restore and preserve estuaries to assure they function effectively in the long term. Measures could include additional reserves, streamside protection, planting, removal of invasive species, scientific research, restoration, and response to climate change. Funding should be from multiple sources. Estuary restoration should encourage education and volunteer involvement. The League recognizes that dredging may be necessary to keep deep-water channels open for maritime commerce. Prior to activity, environmental assessments must be completed to ensure protection of habitat. Design and execution should minimize damage to natural habitats. Recognizing that mining affects water quantity, quality, and habitat, mining practices should be strictly regulated to minimize damage and require restoration. In some instances, where preserving water quality and habitat is vital, mining should be banned.

# Energy Conservation

Adopted May 1973; Educational Update 2003\*

1. The members of the League of Women Voters of Oregon support state policies which promote long range planning for conservation and wise development of energy sources. The League believes the public should have an opportunity to influence decisions on the development of particular sources and the siting of specific installations. League supports:
  1. A governmental agency to evaluate power needs estimates and plan source development. This agency should include representatives of:
    1. utility companies,
    2. the general public, and
    3. all levels of government.
  2. Governmental programs to provide public education and information to encourage information participation in all power decisions, both for production and conservation.
2. The League believes that in any decision to build a power plant:
  1. The most important consideration is environmental quality;
  2. Of lesser importance, but to be taken into account are:
    1. size of electric bills and prices of goods,
    2. industrial development,
    3. cultural standards.
3. The League supports the following conservation measures:
  1. Rate structures encouraging the wise use of energy. To this end League favors:
    1. a low base rate for essential use, above this,
    2. higher rates to discourage waste.
  2. Government funding of research and development efforts to discover new technologies:
    1. to provide efficient methods for energy production and use with minimal environmental damage,
    2. emphasis should be given to renewable resources.
  3. Governmental programs to provide public education and information.
  4. Building codes which will specify standards of design and insulation that minimize waste of energy used for heating, cooling, and lighting.
4. The League believes that state or region should be allowed higher standards for nuclear plants than those set by the federal government.

\*Updated in 2003 for background information only – no position change.

## Nuclear Energy

Adopted May 1980 The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the nuclear power program must be managed to protect current and future generations and to maintain an environment beneficial to life.

1. Technical uncertainties must be publicly recognized and planned for,
2. Responsibility for establishing and maintaining a waste system must not be deferred to future generations, and
3. Effective coordination among all levels of government – federal, state, local – and the private sector is imperative in planning and carrying out programs for transportation, waste storage, and safety, with responsibility and authority clearly designated.

## Forests

Adopted at LWVOR Convention 2021 (taken from LWVOR.org, formatting subject to change with 2021 update)

The League of Women Voters of OREGON finds:

That all benefits of the forests—ecological, human and economic—are inextricably interconnected. Healthy forests are essential to habitat for a diversity of plant and animal life, to the hydrologic cycle, and to carbon storage to mitigate global warming. In addition, healthy forests are essential to a forest products industry with the jobs and goods they provide, and to the economic and aesthetic values of their recreational opportunities. Therefore, The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports:

- Laws and policies to ensure that forest management (for timber extraction, recreation or any other activity) is carried out in a manner that will sustain healthy forests, streams and habitats. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the following are essential elements of an adequate forest practices policy:
  - The public must be informed and involved in the decision-making process in the development of regulations. There must be adequate public notice of forest practices permit applications, hearings, meetings and proposed actions. Public review and comment at each phase of policy and regulation development should be required. Citizens and stakeholders must be represented on the decision-making bodies;
  - There must be authority and funding for enforcement of regulations. Existing land use and forest practices regulations must be monitored and enforced, and should

be responsive to changing scientific knowledge. There must be coordination of regulations for public and private lands among governmental entities;

- Riparian zones are an integral part of the forest ecosystem and must be regulated adequately to protect the streams and the wildlife dependent upon the streams;
  - (stet.) Education should be made available to timber owners on scientifically sound forest practices with the establishment of a small landowners' agency for this purpose;
  - Environmental values of the lands proposed for trade must be considered before the economic values;
  - Trained appraisers, with public oversight, must be used. The right of appeal must be available to the public;
  - Full accounting of all costs, including cumulative ecological impacts, of timber harvests and other forest uses must be considered in forest activity decisions;
- Forest management must be responsive to scientific research and knowledge and should include:
    - mapping, classification and protection of all streams,
    - more and better data—including total watershed analysis,
    - evaluation of cumulative effects of various activities in the forest in the consideration of individual forest practice permits, and
    - planning for sustainability of forest ecosystems.
- The State should consider ecological protections the most important factor in deciding which activities to allow on state forest lands;
    - Motorized activities should be restricted and in separate areas from non-motorized activities
    - Forest roads must be built, maintained and decommissioned to have the least impact on the forest ecosystems. Some areas on state lands should be roadless;
    - Educate consumers about the human and ecological values of our forests as well as the opportunities and benefits of more efficient use of forest products, recycling and the use of alternatives to wood;
    - Fund independent scientific research that would include improved forest practices and ecologically sound alternatives to the use of wood;
    - Tax benefits and compensation should be considered to encourage small landowners to manage their forests in an ecologically sustainable manner;
    - Oregon schools must be fully funded with less reliance on timber harvests; and
    - Trust lands should remain in public ownership.

## Hazardous Materials

National Position (No national position at this time.)

## Land Use

Adopted May 1995; Educational Update 2002\*

### Citizen Participation

Citizen participation, education, communication and ongoing reevaluation are essential elements in the comprehensive planning process. Recognizing the need for effective citizen participation, the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the following factors should be considered in establishing citizen advisory groups in all jurisdictions within the state involved in land use planning:

1. Representation on a broad socioeconomic, geographic and occupational basis.
2. Appointment for a specific project with specified goals and terms, and provision for an adequate orientation to the purposes of the agency.
3. Provision for communication among citizens, citizen advisory groups and planning agencies.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports appointment of Citizen Involvement Committees (CICs), separate from planning commissions, to assist local governing bodies with their citizens' involvement programs.

### Regional and Urban Growth

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a system of local government based upon constitutional home rule for metropolitan districts, counties and cities. The League recognizes certain principles of good local government. These are:

1. Democratic representation and control.
2. Basic simplicity with power to plan for future growth or change.
3. Consideration of the interdependence of land use, transportation and environmental quality in all comprehensive plans.

The League supports the establishment of a regional government in an area where planning and delivery of services can be more efficiently and economically provided by such a government.

## Statewide Planning

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) as the statewide planning agency. We also support the 19 statewide land use goals. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports policies that promote both conservation and development of land as a natural resource, in accordance with Oregon's land use goals. Applying this principle, the League believes:

- The state should have the prime responsibility for establishing statewide planning goals and for supervising and coordinating comprehensive land use plans, with participation by citizens and by local and regional governments.
- The state, with citizen participation, should identify, regulate and enforce areas of critical statewide concern.
- Consideration of accurate information concerning water availability and quality should be a prime factor when making land use decisions.
- Taxation and assessment policies should support comprehensive land use plans.

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports protection of private property rights commensurate with overall consideration of public health and environmental protection.

\*Updated in 2002 for background information only – no position change.

## Parks

Adopted January 1999

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that a parks system is an appropriate function of state government and should provide the following services:

- Acquire, protect and preserve natural, scenic, cultural, historic, and wildlife sites and other resources;
- Provide camping and a variety of other recreational opportunities, consistent with the natural environment;
- Offer interpretive and educational information and programs regarding the history, culture, and natural resources of the state and the features of specific parklands;
- Protect public ownership of beaches;
- Secure affordable and safe access to parks and ocean beaches.

PROGRAM. The LWVOR believes that to be effective the Oregon parks system must have:

- Competent personnel in sufficient numbers;
- Clear assignment of responsibility;
- Adequate, stable funding;
- Coordination with different agencies and levels of government;
- Well-defined channels for citizen input and review;
- Consideration of local concerns when consistent with statewide public interest;
- Reasonable protection from crime and vandalism;
- Cooperation and coordination with the private sector when in the public interest; and
- Long-range planning.

**FUNDING.** The LWVOR supports a balance and varied mixture of revenues for Oregon's parks with the General Fund providing basic support for departmental operations. While the LWVOR believes user fees are sometimes appropriate, the League opposes them for non-intensive, brief visits. The sale of annual use permits is encouraged. Other appropriate revenue sources include but are not limited to recreational vehicle and automobile registration fees, lottery funds, and certain specific charges, such as bottle taxes. The Oregon parks system should actively seek donations of land, funds, facilities and services.

**SERVICE PROVISIONS.** The LWVOR advocates the efficient provision of services in state parks under state supervision and control. In general, the League is opposed to the private management of parks but supports well-supervised contracts for services with a reasonable return for the Oregon parks system. Use of correction-system and volunteer labor is supported if it is well supervised.

**PLANNING.** The LWVOR believes that the Oregon parks system requires a long-range strategic plan that includes periodic evaluation and is adequately funded. Such a plan should give high priority to:

- Preservation and maintenance of existing parks;
- Protection and expansion of public access to ocean beaches;
- Acquisition of additional park resources;
- Provision of campground facilities and day-use areas; and
- Protection of scenic waterways.

## Seismic Risks

Adopted March 1995

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all levels of government share the responsibility of coordinating, implementing and funding an effective program to mitigate

Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards. Priority must be given to mitigation that protects human life and safeguards critical life support systems. The League supports:

- Educating the public about the grave significance of Oregon's earthquake and tsunami threat and encouraging preparedness.
- Improving the safety of transportation systems and establishing alternate routes around bridges and overpasses which are likely to be unsafe after an earthquake or tsunami.
- Establishing tsunami warning signals and evacuation routes.
- Evaluating dams that threaten population centers and taking remedial actions, such as reinforcing dams, and developing maps and downstream notification procedures.

LWVOR supports as essential elements of an effective earthquake and tsunami program:

1. Comprehensive education efforts:
  - All school children should be taught to understand Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards and how to respond to various situations and conditions that may arise.
  - Schools' earthquake and tsunami plans, education and drills should be monitored and analyzed for adequacy.
2. Improved preparedness:
  - Federal, state, and local chain of command should be established and fully coordinated. The emergency communication system should be enhanced and regularly tested.
  - Emergency Services should be accessible and housed in safe buildings. Citizens should be encouraged to develop emergency plans, including supply kits.
  - When citing critical facilities, tsunami run up and inundation as well as seismic factors such as severe ground shaking, liquefaction, massive landslide potential, and subsidence should be considered.
  - Geological reports identifying property at risk should be on file and accessible to the public. Property that poses extreme hazards should be designated as unbuildable.

## Solid Waste

National Position (No national position at this time.)

## Water Policy – Quality and Quantity

Adopted April 2011; Replaced positions on Water Policy and Planning (adopted January 1977; revised March 1985) and Water Quality (adopted January 1969)

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that water is a resource that should be managed for the benefit of the public and as sustainable habitat for all life forms. The League supports

Oregon state policies and statutes that promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and management of ground and surface water and the improvement of water quality. Regulating agencies that govern the protection and conservation of water should be transparent and provide the public easy access to information. The League supports management approaches that maximize interagency communication to include but are not limited to:

1. Uniform definitions of “beneficial uses” and other terminology for both quality and quantity management,
2. Coordination of activities including water allocation, measurement, monitoring/ testing, enforcement of water law and the promotion of water conservation,
3. Well-defined statutory enforcement procedures and the funding to protect water resources held in common, and
4. Recognition of the variability of local/basin/watershed quality and quantity needs.

The League recognizes the application of historic prior appropriations of water but supports modifications in order to accomplish the following:

1. Consider both in-stream and out-of-stream beneficial uses of water,
2. Facilitate changes from one beneficial use of water to another,
3. Provide incentives for water user conservation,
4. Incorporate evolving scientific understanding of natural water systems in waste management,
5. Develop priority uses for water in times of shortage, and
6. Expand protection of in-stream beneficial uses such as minimum perennial stream flow.

The League believes that the interdependence of land use planning and water planning must be recognized and required at all levels of government:

1. Local comprehensive plans, watershed plans, basin plans, state and regional plans should be coordinated and complementary.
2. Roles and responsibilities of all decision makers and agencies affecting water resource and quality issues should be clearly defined.

The League believes that all planning for ground and surface water should include consideration for both the quality of the water and the availability of water to meet the beneficial uses. Planning at all levels should consider existing water rights and current and projected uses. The League acknowledges that this may be best accomplished at the watershed/basin level if adequate funding and professional staffing are available. Basin/ watershed water management should be efficient and economical, responsive to public need, flexible to allow for changes over time, and lead to conservation and allocation of the resource in the public interest. Transfers of

water between basins should require coordination with planning and water use in both basins. The League recognizes that effective planning for water protection and use is most effective with a complete inventory of the water resource including all domestic wells and encourages moving toward this goal. Priority efforts should be directed to geographic areas with identified problems and vulnerabilities. The League opposes degradation of all of Oregon's surface and ground water. The League supports policies and legislation that integrate water quality into resource management and include but are not limited to standards for:

1. Potable water and drinking water treatment facilities,
2. Placement and inspection of septic tanks and alternative individual treatment systems,
3. In-stream surface water quality for recreational use, including primary contact sports, commercial and sport fishing, and habitat protection,
4. Ground water quality for recognized beneficial uses,
5. Agricultural, municipal, forestry and industrial wastewater discharge and runoff,
6. Uniform water quality testing protocols– updated as scientific methodologies improve,
7. Permitting and enforcement procedures with agency funding adequate to ensure timely compliance,
8. Adequate, well maintained sewers and sewage treatment facilities and
9. Control and treatment of runoff from non-pervious surfaces.

The League recognizes that conservation strategies for surface and ground water, including but not limited to incentives, regulations and rationing in emergency situations, are needed to meet future demand. Individuals, agriculture, municipalities, forestry and industry should be encouraged to develop practices to reduce water usage and minimize pollution. Support should be provided for upgrading and maintaining the equipment necessary for water conservation. The League supports the need to build resiliency and innovation into water planning in order to address climate change impacts. Public involvement should be encouraged throughout the water management and planning processes. The processes should be transparent and include educational components. The League acknowledges that all water users must share in the cost of water management. Rate payers should have primary responsibility for infrastructure maintenance, delivery and conservation. The state should have primary responsibility for planning, research, data collection and public outreach. Permit fees should be a significant contributor to the development of infrastructure.

## Water Resources of the Columbia River and the Columbia River Task Force

Adopted 1979

1. In order to meet the present and future water needs within the Columbia River Basin, the League of Women Voters believes comprehensive planning on a basin-wide basis for conservation, development, and management of the water is essential to the optimum utilization of our water resources. Machinery is needed which will:
  - Provide coordinated planning and administration among federal, state, and other agencies;
  - Establish a process for resolving conflicts among uses;
  - Establish procedures which provide information and an opportunity for citizen participation in policy decisions affecting the directions which water resources development will take.
2. The federal government has a necessary role in financing water resources development, but state and local governments and private users should share such costs, as far as possible, based on benefits received and the ability to pay.
3. The League of Women Voters believes that wise planning for the use of water in the Columbia River Basin requires an inventory of the water resource within the Basin.
  - This inventory should include all water-related information including:
    1. ground and surface water sources,
    2. viable water rights,
    3. current use, and
    4. projected future needs.
  - The inventory should be readily available to concerned agencies and the general public.
4. The League also believes that minimum stream flows should be established as a public right and maintained on all streams in the Columbia River Basin.

## Social Policy

### Adult Corrections

Adopted August 1983

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.
  - The League supports alternatives at all stages of the criminal justice process, including but not limited to:
    1. pre-trial diversions,
    2. employment and educational programs,
    3. restitution,
    4. treatment centers for mental illness and substance abuse.

- 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:
  - Minimum security regional treatment and/or program focused facilities.
  - Adequate staffing and program must be part of any facility within the corrections system. Prison programs should provide each inmate with:
    1. educational and vocational training,
    2. opportunities for meaningful work, and
    3. adequate medical and mental health care.
  - Maximum security prisons are needed for violent criminals judged dangerous to society.
- 3. The League believes that comprehensive transitional programs are essential for successful completion of rehabilitation for each inmate released or paroled from a correctional facility.
- 4. The League supports the adoption of sentencing guidelines that set parameters for judges throughout the state in order to reduce disparity in sentencing.
  - Judges should be responsible for determining the length of sentences.
  - The League supports continuation of the Parole Board.

## Child Care

Adopted March 1989

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that child care is a social and economic issue that reaches beyond the family into the community. Quality child care needs to be available, accessible and affordable to all families for children of all ages and with differing needs.

1. The League of Women Voters supports a diverse child care system to accommodate different parental choices and needs. Such a system may include day care centers, group homes, and family day care homes.
  - The State of Oregon should establish appropriate standards to ensure that high quality care exists in all settings. For centers and group homes: these standards should address facilities, staff qualifications, and number of children served. Program, parent/care giver communication, administration and transportation should be included for centers and may also be considered for group homes. There should be flexible guidelines for family day care homes because of the unique character of these facilities.
  - The State of Oregon should enforce mandatory regulations by funding a sufficient number of inspectors.

- The State of Oregon should set requirements for adequate training for care givers and ensure those training opportunities are available. This could include state provision of training and/or state incentives for others to provide training.
  - City and county governments should participate in enforcing health and fire standards.
2. Affordable child care should be available and accessible for children with differing needs and in various age groups.
- While parents have the primary responsibility for choosing child care, a coordinated effort between parents and government, together with providers, employers, and private groups is necessary to deliver quality child care at an affordable price.
  - The State of Oregon should:
    1. Provide financial assistance for child care expenses to low- and middle-income families based on need. Such assistance could include tax credits for parents with a ceiling based on income.
    2. Support resource and referral programs.
    3. Encourage employer involvement in the child care system.
    4. Encourage development of school-age child care programs.
  - Parents in job training, in school, with special-needs children and/or needing respite care services should be eligible for financial assistance for child care based on demonstrated need.

Child caregivers should be awarded recognition commensurate with their responsibilities. The State of Oregon should take a leadership role in elevating the professional status of child caregivers and ensuring adequate compensation. National Position (adopted in 1988): “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.”

## Children at Risk

Adopted January 1995

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports comprehensive statewide, locally-based programs and services for teen pregnancy prevention and for teenage parents. Such programs and services should include elements of the following:
  - family planning services,
  - school-based health centers,
  - parenting skills’ education,
  - cooperation/coordination among agencies providing services,

- evaluation and accountability measurements,
  - easy and appropriate access to information and services,
  - mentoring and counseling for teenagers and their parents, including peer counseling,
  - community involvement and support groups,
  - abuse prevention,
  - male responsibility in teen pregnancy prevention,
  - broad public education, and 12. substance abuse prevention.
2. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the state should have the primary responsibility for funding programs addressing teenage pregnancy prevention and teen parenting. Elements to be included, but not limited to, are:
    - equitable funding of programs for young women and young men,
    - adequate funding for state agencies with responsibilities to children,
    - cooperative efforts with the private sector,
    - funds earmarked for community programs, urban and rural, which provide after school and weekend activities for teens, and
    - shared funding responsibility, when appropriate, among state, local and private sources.
  3. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports development of required curriculum for all school districts relative to teen pregnancy and parenting, accompanied by implementation requirements, which covers, but is not limited to, the following areas:
    - comprehensive, age-appropriate family life sexuality education K-12,
    - parenting skills education,
    - specialized education programs for pregnant teens and teenage parents, and
    - teacher training at the baccalaureate level and as continuing education.
  4. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports programs directed to assist pregnant teens and teen parents. These programs include the following:
    - job training and adequate wages,
    - involvement and financial support requirements for fathers,
    - counseling to break the cycles of abuse, poverty, and teen pregnancy,
    - health care, including prenatal care,
    - accessible, affordable housing,
    - child care,
    - transportation access,
    - completion of secondary education, and
    - self-esteem enhancement, career opportunities, and transition to self-sufficiency.

*Updated Position 2015*

*In the Spring of 2015, League members throughout Oregon studied early childhood education, discussed consensus questions posed by the LWVOR study committee, and submitted their views*

*to the state League. Those views were combined to formulate the following position, which can now be used for advocacy by local Leagues as well as the LWVOR Action Team. LWVOR Children at Risk Position Statement: The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that the early years of a child's life are crucial in building the foundation for educational attainment and greatly impact success or failure in later life. Early intervention and prevention measures are effective in helping children reach their full potential. The League supports policies, programs, and funding 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:*

- *Nutrition and food access for vulnerable children and families*
- *Access to affordable, safe, and stable housing*
- *Early screening (physical, dental, mental, and behavioral) for all children; early prenatal care and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental)*
- *Access to affordable, quality child care (see LWVOR Child Care position) Access to early literacy and pre-school programs, including but not limited to Early Head Start and Head Start*
- *Programs for mental health and addictions treatment for parents*
- *Family support, including but not limited to home visiting, parenting classes, and family relief nurseries*
- *Comprehensive services for children with developmental and cognitive disabilities*
- *Use of evidence-based practices in child welfare and foster care*
- *Programs to reduce poverty by providing parents with assistance in job training and education Policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities*

*The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that governments, at all levels, have a responsibility to oversee and coordinate a comprehensive network of services to maximize children's readiness to be successful in school while optimizing available resources. National Position, adopted 1994: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that 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 wellbeing, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children. These include:*

- *child abuse/neglect prevention;*
- *teen pregnancy prevention;*
- *quality health care, including nutrition and prenatal care;*
- *early childhood education;*
- *developmental services, emphasizing children ages 0-3;*
- *family support services;*

- *violence prevention.*

## Public Postsecondary Education

Adopted January 1985, updated June 2018

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes the primary goal of Oregon's public postsecondary education should be to provide a broad spectrum of higher education for professional, vocational, and personal enrichment. Individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to have rewarding careers, earn higher wages, and make positive contributions to their community. Through sustaining equitable access and a seamless path from preK to postsecondary education, more Oregon students will prosper.

### *Postsecondary Education System*

Oregon needs a strong, high-quality system of higher education:

- Oregon's postsecondary institutions have distinct missions and goals and should be evaluated based upon how each institution's goals are met.
- The State General Fund should give high priority to financial aid for students and general operating funds. Capital construction should come from other sources, including bonding, rather than the General Fund.
- In order to attract and retain quality faculty, salaries and research opportunities should be appropriately competitive.
- It is imperative in our institutions that we have good fiscal management and accountability for the funding provided.

For the most effective use of state educational resources, state public institutions should cooperate and coordinate programs resulting in:

- Consistent statewide standards, and
- Easy transfer of credit between schools.

If state funding necessitates limiting access, such limitation should consider equity as well as academic achievement and financial need.

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)

HECC should place priority on:

- Providing one strategic vision for higher education in Oregon;

- Developing biennial budget recommendations for public postsecondary education in Oregon and making funding allocations to Oregon's public community colleges and public universities; and
- Developing standards for programs such as dual credit, transfer, and credit for prior learning.

HECC's role should be to facilitate system high priorities while allowing as much autonomy as possible within each institution.

### *Community Colleges*

The primary role of community colleges should be in the areas of:

- Workforce and vocational-technical training;
- Developmental education (e.g. high school equivalency, English language learning);
- Lower division college courses that prepare students for an associate's degree or transfer to university; and
- Hobby and recreation courses have a secondary role and must be self-supporting, as defined by statute.

If state funding necessitates limiting access, such limitation should consider equity as well as financial need.

### *Independent Governing Boards*

- Cooperation and coordination should be emphasized by all Oregon public postsecondary education institutions and governing boards.
- The performance of independent boards at each institution should be monitored to ensure that they are responsive to the institution's needs and the needs of the state as a whole.

### *Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE)*

1. For the most effective use of state educational resources, OSSHE institutions should cooperate and coordinate programs resulting in:
  - Consistent statewide standards.
  - Easy transfer of credit between schools.
2. If state funding for OSSHE institutions necessitates limiting access, such limitation should be:

- Academic, e.g. entrance requirements.
  - Financial limitation is the least desirable.
3. Oregon needs a strong, high-quality system of higher education.
    - State funding must reflect this need, and high priority should be given to providing sufficient funds to improve the general excellence of the state system.
    - In order to attract and retain quality faculty, salaries and research opportunities should be appropriately competitive.
    - Adequate funding should also be provided to ensure complete, up-to-date libraries and to maintain or upgrade the physical plants at all of our colleges and universities.
    - It is imperative that in our institutions we have good fiscal management accountability for the funding provided.
  4. League members feel that the roles and interrelationships of the present regional colleges, specialized institutions, and research universities are properly balanced.
    - Oregon State University and the University of Oregon should remain comprehensive research universities.
    - Portland State University should be allowed to expand gradually.

### *Community Colleges*

1. The primary role of community colleges should be in the areas of:
  - Vocational-technical training;
  - Developmental education (e.g. high school equivalency, English as a second language);
  - Lower division college courses.
  - Community adult education (hobby and recreation courses) should have a secondary role and must be self-supporting as defined by statute.
2. Community colleges should maintain an open door policy. If funding necessitates limiting access:
  - Such limitation should be geographic, i.e. higher tuition for out-of-district students;
  - Academic or financial limitations are the least desirable.
3. State funding for community colleges should be according to the formulas set by the 1961 legislation. Local control must be maintained because it affords the community colleges the necessary flexibility to respond to local needs.

### *Boards and Commissions*

1. Cooperation and coordination should be emphasized by all Oregon public postsecondary education institutions and governing boards.

2. The current boards dealing with education, the Board of Education, and the Board of Higher Education need no structural change. The League does not favor the creation of a new education governing body

Editor's note: for K-12 education, see Fiscal Policy Position, School District Financing.

## Farmworker Issues

Adopted January 2001 The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes all citizens benefit from the agricultural bounty produced by Oregon's farmers and farmworkers, and that the state has a role in supporting the sound and fair relationship between farmers and the agricultural workforce, with the goal of economic and social justice for both parties. LWVOR believes the state must work for the humane and respectful treatment of workers as well as the viability of Oregon farms. Currently laws that regulate the working environment for agricultural workers are different from laws regulating the working conditions in other industries. The LWVOR believes the differences between agriculture and other industries justify some variance; but where farm work is similar to other labor, regulatory differences should be narrowed.

- All farmworkers should be fairly compensated, earning at least minimum wage.
- With the possible exception of piece-rate work, some farm labor should be eligible for overtime pay.
- Unemployment insurance should cover permanent, year-round farmworkers.
- Hourly-paid farmworkers should receive paid rest breaks; all farmworkers should be provided adequate time away from work for meals.
- The state should continue to improve the safety of agricultural workplaces for farmworkers.
- Rules for child labor and for the use of farm and forestry labor contractors should maintain high standards of worker protections.
- State laws and programs, including non-governmental efforts, should address farmworkers' needs for a broad range of services, such as child care, safe and decent housing, sanitary working and living conditions, and access to education and health care. Education programs that are bilingual and culturally appropriate should be offered to assure that workers understand safe work practices, workplace rules, and grievance procedures.

LWVOR supports the right of Oregon farmworkers to collectively bargain. Farmworkers should have the right to hold union elections. Employer retaliation for collective activity should be prohibited. Legislation establishing fair rules for unionization by farmworkers should be developed through a dialogue between workers and employers. Monitoring of union elections and contracts by either a private commission or a state entity should be fair and under terms

agreeable to both workers and employers. Mediation programs should be encouraged. LWVOR believes consistent and adequate enforcement of state regulations is a key to better conditions for farmworkers. Currently, we find enforcement to be inadequate and inconsistent. LWVOR supports increasing enforcement staff, increasing fines and penalties for serious violations, and collection of civil penalties for infractions of laws. LWVOR supports programs to help farmers understand and comply with worker protection rules. LWVOR believes that safe, decent, and affordable housing should be available to all farmworkers. Oregon currently has an acute shortage of such housing for its agricultural workforce. LWVOR supports increased state funding for farmworker housing, including support, with other funds, for planning, development costs, rural infrastructure, startup costs, operating subsidies, emergency housing, and training and assistance for sponsoring organizations. The state has an important role in ensuring the safety of farmworker housing provided on farms. Such housing that has not been registered with the state should be located and brought into compliance with state standards. Public funding should emphasize best practices, such as community-based housing, and should encourage new models that are decent and safe housing alternatives for seasonal and for permanent, year round workers; these two groups may require different types of housing.

## Gun Safety

National Position Statement of Position on Gun Control, as Adopted by 1990 Convention and amended by the 1994 and 1998 Conventions:

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.

## Health Policy Adult Mental Health in Oregon

Adopted January 1987; Educational Update 2001\*; language update 2008\*\*

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a comprehensive and integrated adult mental health services delivery system in Oregon which:
  - Includes both community and state programs and facilities;
  - Provides for coordination of local and state mental health planning based on regular needs assessments;
  - Provides funding by a coordinated mix of federal, state, local, and private sector dollars; and
  - Includes state budget allocations that reflect service priorities jointly determined by Community Mental Health Programs and the state Addictions and Mental Health Division.
2. The League supports the concept of care, treatment, and support in the least restrictive environment possible which:
  - Ensures continuity of care and humaneness; and
  - Balances the rights and safety of individuals with mental disorders, other interested parties, and society in general.
3. The League believes that the mental health delivery system should include:
  - Adults with:
    1. Mental and emotional illness; and
    2. Alcohol and drug addiction.
  - Services that focus on recovery of the individual through use of evidence-based crisis intervention and ongoing support. These services could include alternatives to hospitalization, early intervention, residential services, supportive housing, and services delivered by peers in sufficient mix and quantity to afford an acceptable quality of life for consumers and their families.
  - Mental health service providers, administrators, advocates, consumers, their families, and lay citizens as participants in:
    1. Service delivery planning;
    2. The evaluation of services; and
    3. The provision of community education.
1. The League supports an adult mental health civil commitment process which:
  - Ensures statewide consistency in the application of commitment statutes;
  - Provides for adequate and equitable investigation and examination; and
  - Protects the rights and needs of all interested parties.

\*Updated 2001 for background information only—no position change. \*\*Updated 2008 for language changes only in the position statement—no position change.

## Mental Health Services for Children and Youth

Adopted January 1975

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports a coordinated plan for comprehensive mental health services for all levels of need to children and youth provided under the direction of a single state service agency responsible for basic state standards. We support the appropriation of consistent and sufficient funds to implement state-mandated programs.

1. A well-coordinated comprehensive mental health service delivery plan should cover such concerns as:
  - Community level services that are accessible, visible, and available to all income levels through a graduated fee schedule;
  - Community level programs that provide early diagnostic and referral services, 24-hour emergency care, treatment services and facilities, aftercare, and follow-up care;
  - The development of preventive programs;
  - Coordination of all levels of government and all public and private agencies working with children;
  - Standards of training for all personnel appropriate to job placement;
  - Consistent state funds supplemented by all available resources, public and private;
  - Utilization of all local resources;
  - Basic state standards which encourage quality treatment and care while permitting alternative programs.
2. The League of Women Voters further supports consistent and sufficient state funds for special education programs in the public school, including:
  - Programs based upon the child's individual needs;
  - Special training for teachers working with disturbed children.

## Physical Health Care

National Position: Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

## Homeless Youth

Adopted 2007

Parents are legally responsible for their children. When parents are unable to fulfill that responsibility, the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that communities and governments at all levels have a responsibility to provide programs and services to meet the needs of runaway and homeless youth. In order to help families stay together, prevent youth homelessness, and reduce the need for more expensive future services, the LWVOR supports

providing services such as family crisis counseling, child care, parenting education, mental health and addiction treatment, low-cost housing, and health care. When youth are separated from their families, the LWVOR supports providing services to these youth, such as shelter, food, education, health care, mental health and addiction treatment, plus outreach to encourage youth to use services. Older youth need additional services, such as assistance with independent living skills and with finding employment and more permanent housing. These services may be provided by government or by private organizations that receive government and/or private funding. Coordination of these services is necessary to avoid duplication and service gaps. Youth should be served regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability. All levels of government should have funding responsibility for preventive and supportive services to families and homeless youth. Private organizations are encouraged to provide funding and services. Government funds should be adequate and allocated according to demonstrated need. Agencies must show that their programs are effective.

## Housing

National Position Criteria for Housing Supply: The following considerations can be applied to programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family:

1. The responsibility for achieving national housing goals rests primarily with the federal government, which should:
  - Assure that our economic system is functioning to produce and maintain sufficient decent housing for citizens at all income levels;
  - Compensate for any failure or inadequacy of the system by building, financing, renting and selling homes to those citizens whose housing needs are not being met;
  - Give a variety of incentives to local jurisdictions to encourage them to provide within their boundaries an adequate supply of decent housing for low- and moderate-income groups;
  - Withhold federal funds from communities that fail to encourage such housing.
2. State and local governments should assist by establishing effective agencies to aid, promote, coordinate and supplement the housing programs of the federal government and the private sector.
3. Government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.
4. When families or individuals cannot afford decent housing, government should provide assistance in the form of income and/or subsidized housing.

5. Government programs providing subsidies to the building, financing and insuring industries for housing for lower-income families should be evaluated in terms of units produced rather than in terms of benefits accruing to these industries.
6. Government at all levels should develop policies that will assure sufficient land at reasonable cost on which to develop housing and that will assure fulfillment of other goals such as access to employment, preservation of open space, environmental cleanliness and beauty, and other aspects of a suitable living environment.
7. Regional and metropolitan planning should be promoted to prevent haphazard urban growth, and housing for low- and moderate-income families should be provided as apart of all planned neighborhoods or communities.
8. Lower-income families should not be segregated in large developments or neighborhoods. As their economic status improves, lower-income families should be enabled to continue to live in the same units as private tenants or as homeowners, if they are so inclined.
9. Housing should be designed to meet human needs and should be built with amenities that will encourage economic integration within apartment buildings as well as neighborhoods.
10. Publicly assisted housing should be included in viable, balanced communities, with provision for quality public services and facilities, including schools, transportation, recreation, etc., that will encourage integration and stability.
11. Zoning practices and procedures that will counteract racial and economic isolation should be promoted.
12. State and local governments should adopt and enforce:
  - Uniform building codes with standards based on performance;
  - Housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens.
13. State and local tax structures should be examined and revised to:
  - Benefit communities that build housing for lower-income families;
  - Encourage private owners to improve their homes; Reduce speculative land costs.
14. Government, industry and labor should encourage innovative building techniques to reduce the cost of housing production.
15. Rights of tenants to negotiate for proper maintenance, management of facilities and services should be protected.
16. Housing programs should be administered by individuals trained for the jobs and sympathetic with the needs of their clientele.
17. Citizen groups should participate in the development of publicly assisted housing programs by:
  - Evaluating performance;
  - Activating nonprofit sponsorships;
  - Supporting legislation;

- Developing public awareness of housing discrimination and need.

## Juvenile Justice

Adopted March 1981; Educational Update 2000\*

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.

\*Updated for background information only – no position change.

## Women's Issues

LWVOR uses several LWVUS positions relating to women in supporting and opposing specific legislative proposals, statewide initiatives and community activities. The positions include: The League of Women Voters of the United States believes in the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The League is convinced that rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices. The League supports “equal rights for all regardless of sex.” The League further believes that governments at all levels share the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. The League supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, including quality of health care, income assistance, housing and public transportation access.