

ELECTION ISSUES - Group 6

Friday, January 26, 2024, at 10 am

Norman Turrill and Melanie Billings-Yun, co discussion leaders, and Chris Cobey, notetaker

Topics suggested by members in the League's 10-23 survey

The pros/cons of replacing the Electoral College with the national popular vote

Democracy in crisis

Rank choice voting

Voting rights legislation

Vote by mail

Registering first time voters

How to prevent walkouts, government shutdowns

House of Representative dysfunction

How to combat disinformation and recognize reliable information

Subversion of journalism & inaccessibility of their audience

Election integrity

Political civility and bi-partisanship

Polarization, extremism

Voter suppression

What does the Constitution actually say?

Campaign finance reform

Reduction of money in politics

"Obscene wealth," organized billionaires, and systemic inequities

LWVPDX POSITIONS relevant to election issues- civic education

The page #s below are those in the **LWVPDX of Portland: Positions updated June 2023**

<http://lwvpdx.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/LWVPDX-Positions-June-2023.pdf>

County Government (2004, 1983, 1978, 1976, 1964, 1958) page 8

In the interest of providing economical and efficient county government that is responsive to the people, the League of Women Voters of Portland supports home rule for Multnomah County.

The League of Women Voters of Portland also supports:

- Separation of administrative and legislative functions;
- Salaries of elected officials based on recommendations by outside professional consultants with final approval by the Board of County Commissioners;
- A paid lobbyist (intergovernmental liaison) to represent Multnomah County's interests;
- Election of Multnomah County Commissioners and Auditor;
- Appointment of Sheriff, Assessor and Director of Elections;
- Election of County Commissioners from single-member districts;
- Freedom for an elected official to run for another office without having to resign from his/her current office;
- Filling of vacancies on the board of County Commissioners by appointment, with appointees free to run for election;
- No limit on the number of terms elected officials may serve;
- Clearance of initiative petitions by their sponsors with an officer similar to legislative counsel to ensure correct wording and legal application.

LWVUS Positions relevant to election issues - civic education

The page #s below are those in the **LWVUS Impact on Issues 2022-2024**

<https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues> Click on purple box to pull up document; click on page # to read position

Citizen's Right to Vote, as announced by the national board, March 1982: p.23

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.

To read **the League History on Voting Rights**, see pages 23 - 32, which include these subtitles:

The Voting rights Act of 1965

National Voter Registration Act

Voter Engagement and Turnout

Choosing the President

League Investment in Online Voter Information

Opposing Voting Barriers

Expanding the National Voter Registration Act and Increasing Participation

The For the People Act and the Freedom to Vote Act

Apportionment (1966, 1982) page 35

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained, and that the US Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment.

Redistricting, (as adopted by concurrence, June 2016): page 38

1. Responsibility for redistricting preferably should be vested in an independent special commission, with membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups.

2. Every redistricting process should include:

- a. Specific timelines for the steps leading to a redistricting plan.
- b. Full disclosure throughout the process and public hearings on the plan proposed for adoption.
 - i. Redistricting at all levels of government must be accomplished in an open, unbiased manner with citizen participation and access at all levels and steps of the process.
 - ii. Should be subject to open meeting laws.
- c. A provision that any redistricting plan should be adopted by the redistricting authority with more than a simple majority vote.
- d. Remedial provisions established in the event that the redistricting authority fails to enact a plan. Specific provisions should be made for court review of redistricting measures and for courts to require the redistricting authority to act on a specific schedule.
 - i. Time limits should be set for initiating court action for review.
 - ii. The courts should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the standards have not been met.

3. The standards on which a redistricting plan is based, and on which any plan should be judged, must:

- a. Be enforceable in court.
- b. Require:
 - i. Substantially equal population.
 - ii. Geographic contiguity.
 - iii. Effective representation of racial and linguistic minorities.
- c. Provide for (to the extent possible):

- i. Promotion of partisan fairness.
- ii. Preservation and protection of “communities of interest.”
- iii. Respect for boundaries of municipalities and counties.
- d. Compactness and competitiveness may also be considered as criteria so long as they do not conflict with the above criteria.
- e. Explicitly reject:
 - i. Protection of incumbents, through such devices as considering an incumbent’s address.
 - ii. Preferential treatment for a political party, through such devices as considering party affiliation, voting history and candidate residence.

This position does not supersede any existing state League redistricting position.

MONEY IN POLITICS - Campaign Finance (2016) page 42

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should:

Enhance political equality for all citizens; ensure maximum participation by citizens in the political process; protect representative democracy from being distorted by big spending in election campaigns; provide voters sufficient information about candidates and campaign issues to make informed choices; ensure transparency and the public’s right to know who is using money to influence elections; enable candidates to compete equitably for public office; ensure that candidates have sufficient funds to communicate their messages to the public; and combat corruption and undue influence in government.

The League believes that political corruption includes the following:

A candidate or office holder agrees to vote or work in favor of a donor’s interests in exchange for a campaign contribution; an officeholder or staff gives greater access to donors; an officeholder votes or works to support policies that reflect the preferences of individuals or organizations in order to attract contributions from them; a candidate or office holder seeks political contributions implying that there will be retribution unless a donation is given; and the results of the political process consistently favor the interests of significant campaign contributors.

In order to achieve the goals for campaign finance regulation, the League supports:

Public financing of elections, either voluntary or mandatory, in which candidates must abide by reasonable spending limits; enhanced enforcement of campaign finance laws that includes changes to ensure that regulatory agencies are properly funded, staffed, and structured to avoid partisan deadlock in the decision-making process; abolishing Super PACs and abolishing spending coordinated or directed by candidates (other than a candidate's own campaign committee); and restrictions on direct donations and bundling by lobbyists, which may include monetary limits as well as other regulations.

Until full public financing of elections is enacted, limits on election spending are needed in order to meet the League's goals for protecting democratic processes. Among the different entities that spend money to influence elections, the League supports the following comparative limits:

- Higher spending limits for political parties, genuinely non-partisan voter registration and get-out-the vote organizations and activities, and candidates spending money raised from contributors.
- Mid-level spending limits for individual citizens (including wealthy individuals), Political Action Committees (with funds contributed by individuals associated with the sponsoring organization, such as employees, stockholders, members, and volunteers), and candidates spending their own money.
- Lower spending limits for trade associations, labor unions and nonprofit organizations from their general treasury funds.
- Severely restricted spending by for-profit organizations spending from their corporate treasury funds.
- No limits on spending by bona fide newspapers, television, and other media, including the internet, except to address partisan abuse or use of the media to evade campaign finance regulations.

This position is applicable to all federal campaigns for public office — presidential and congressional, primaries, and general elections. It also may be applied to state and local campaigns.

Voter Representation/Electoral Systems (2020) page 51

LWVUS promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices.

Whether for single- or multiple-winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement.

- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities.
- Are verifiable and auditable.
- Promote access to voting.
- Maximize effective votes/minimize wasted votes.
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting.
- Implement alternatives to plurality voting.
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail.

The LWVUS believes in representative government. The League supports electoral systems that elect policymaking bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards — that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g., gerrymandering).

The LWVUS supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative electoral methods, as well as supporting state election laws allowing for more options at both the state and local levels. With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be available. We encourage a concerted voter education process.