LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

Trusted Community Leadership since 1920

Not for Women Only!
The League of Women Voters® is a nonpartisan political organization that:

• encourages informed and active participation in government,
• works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and
• influences public policy through education and advocacy.
LWV Mission

• We do not support or oppose any candidates for office or political parties.

• We want everyone to vote so our elected leaders represent our entire community.

• We are a voice for all, working to connect people directly with government.

• We provide and work from facts. We educate. We advocate for change.
What We Do:  
- Educate  
- Advocate  
- Impact
The first ideas for the League came from the spirit of the suffrage movement and the shock of the First World War. It was believed that a nonpartisan civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy.

The LWV was formally organized in Chicago on February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th amendment was ratified.
The League of Women Voters is not to dissolve any present organization but to unite all existing organizations of women who believe in its principles. It is not to lure women from partisanship but to combine them in an effort for legislation which will protect coming movements, which we cannot even foretell, from suffering the untoward conditions which have hindered for so long the coming of equal suffrage. Are the women of the United States big enough to see their opportunity?

--Carrie C. Catt, NAWSA* President

* National American Woman Suffrage Association
League Position Statements

• The League of Women Voters® takes action on an issue or advocates for a cause only when there is an existing League position that supports the issue or speaks to the cause.

• Biennially the LWV publishes its positions for its members.

• Firm action or advocacy can then be taken on the particular issue addressed by the position. Without an official position, action/advocacy cannot be taken in LWV’s name.
League Position Statements

Issue is identified

The appointed “issue committee” formulates consensus questions

Consensus statements, based on LWV-wide discussions, become the official position when approved by the Board and Members.

Based on Committee research and member discussions, the Board forms a position

Questions are addressed by the membership at large
Milestones in Our History

1920’s

Built the League structure with concentration on study and getting needed legislation passed

Successfully supported passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act providing federal aid for maternal and child care programs

Sponsored, in 1928, the 1st national radio broadcast of a candidate forum.
1930’s

As the result of the depression, WWII, and gas rationing, LWV encouraged small, local, grassroots group meetings.

Successfully supported enactment of the Social Security and Food & Drug Acts.

Launched a campaign to support development of a merit system removing many federal jobs from the spoils system and placing them under Civil service.
Milestones in Our History

1940’s
Milestones in Our History

1940’s

Changed organizational structure to an association of *members* vs. a federation of *state leagues*

Helped lead effort to establish United Nations and ensure U.S. participation

Was recognized by the UN as one of the first NGOs

Supported creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund

Supported creation of NATO and economic aid to less developed countries
Milestones in Our History

1950’s
Milestones in Our History

1950’s

Established the LWV Education program

Testified before Congress against Sen. Joseph McCarthy’s abuse of congressional investigative powers:

“...tolerance and respect for the opinions of others is being jeopardized by men and women...whose minds are apparently unwilling to accept the necessity for dissent within a democracy.”

Rekindled the League’s concern about the depletion and conservation of natural resources

Established LWV Overseas Education Funds
Milestones in Our History

1960’s
Milestones in Our History

1960’s

In response to the civil rights crisis, LWV directed energies to equality of opportunity and supported legislation providing equal access to education, employment, and housing

Added “apportionment” to the national program

Supported presidential suffrage for residents of Washington, DC
Milestones in Our History

1970’s
Milestones in Our History

1970’s

Established some Inter-League Organizations (ILOs) to address regional (vs. state) issues

Focused on issues of income assistance, ERA, popular election of the President, and campaign finance

In 1976, sponsored 1st televised presidential debates since 1960, resulting in receipt of Emmy award

Strengthened work on environmental issues and began building broad national positions on water, air, waste management, land use, and energy
Milestones in Our History

1980’s
Milestones in Our History

1980’s

Stood at the forefront of the effort to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982
Contributed to enactment of the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986
Helped achieve Senate ratification of groundbreaking Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 1988
Sponsored Presidential debates in 1980 and 1984
Milestones in Our History

1990’s
Milestones in Our History

1990’s

Successfully supported reauthorization of the Clean Air Act after a 10 year effort

Adopted position on gun control in 1990

Launched “Take Back the System,” a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections

Helped win passage of the National Voter Registration Act – Motor Voter Act – to increase accessibility to the electoral process ensuring a representative electoral process and every citizen’s right to vote.

Sponsored Presidential Primary debate in 1992
Milestones in Our History

21\textsuperscript{st} Century

Offered “candidate debates” online through League’s Internet-based voter education program, DNet

In 2006, introduced a more effective voter education web site – \texttt{www.VOTE411.org} – currently in use

Supported enactment of the \textit{Help America Vote Act} and the \textit{Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act} in 2002
Milestones in Our History

21st Century (cont.)

Engaged in multi-year education project on Judicial Independence

Filed amicus briefs relating to campaign finance reform, racial bias in jury selection, and Title IX

Established “Democracy Agenda” umbrella that included redistricting, civil liberties, election administration reform, and ethics
League of Women Voters® of Virginia
We have two separate and distinct roles:

**Voters Service/Citizen Education**: we present unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues.

**Action/Advocacy**: we are nonpartisan, and, after study, we use our researched positions to advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest.

We are a nonprofit 501(c)(4) corporation.
Currently, there are 13 local Leagues in Virginia
Local Leagues in Virginia

League of Women Voters of Arlington
League of Women Voters of Charlottesville Area
League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area
League of Women Voters of Falls Church
League of Women Voters of Fredericksburg Area MAL
League of Women Voters of Loudoun County
League of Women Voters of Lynchburg
League of Women Voters of Montgomery County
League of Women Voters of Prince William Area
League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area
League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads
League of Women Voters of Washington County
League of Women Voters of the Williamsburg Area

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Source: League of Women Voters of Virginia
LWV of Virginia

• We advocate on statewide issues after carefully researched study and development of positions with membership input.

• We use our positions as a basis of our advocacy by making our case clearly and directly to the proper level of government.

• We provide non-partisan voter guides, candidate and issue forums, Legislative Directories, information about voting laws and practices and studies about public issues.
LWV - Virginia General Assembly

Aileen Devlin / Daily Press
League of Women Voters® of the Fredericksburg Area
The Fredericksburg Area League was founded in June 2016 to serve Planning District #16 which includes Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford Counties, and Fredericksburg City.
Initial Fredericksburg Activities

Remained in contact with both our state and federal senators and representatives to inform them of the LWV position on issues

Participated, along with members from around the state, in strategy sessions and the Women’s Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) during the 2017 legislative session

Observed Senate and House caucuses
Initial Fredericksburg Activities

Met personally with legislators in Richmond
Conducted voter registration, successfully registering 70 Commonwealth residents, many for the first time
Participated in a variety of conferences to better prepare our members to address critical issues
Prepared and disseminated voter information
Observed local Council, Board, and other meetings
What’s Next
&
Where Do You Fit In?
What Can You Do?

• Educate yourself about the issues facing your family, your neighborhood, your state, the nation, and the world
• Talk to experts in the field to get information about issues so you can be an informed citizen
• Read news from a variety of sources and perspectives so you can better understand issues
• Explore [http://www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)
What Can You Do?

• Learn how government works, how bills are introduced and become laws, and what role you can play in that process
• Learn who your state and federal legislators are and what they stand for
• Be in touch with your legislators; go to their community meetings; stop by their offices to visit and tell them what’s important to you
What Can You Do?

• Register to vote
• **VOTE!**
• Get involved and encourage others to get involved with you
• Join your local League of Women Voters®
  - Student Member
  - Regular Member