

LWVNYS PROGRAM PLANNING

We need your help in defining the NYS program for this new year. Please review the 2005-2007 LWVNYS Program, outlined below, and give your recommendations as to which positions should be retained, dropped, or updated. The following definitions should be used to guide your decisions.

Retain - Members are committed to the position and will actively be involved in supporting LWVNYS efforts to pursue the position's goals.

Drop - the position is no longer useful in its present form or is not supported by members. Action on this position will end. Any future action will require adoption of a new study.

Update - A study of limited scope to reevaluate a position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another position. The aim is to consider position changes.

Send your recommendations to Mary Berkelman at 380 The Parkway, or bring them with you to the January 23 LWV meeting in the Women's Community Building . The deadline for submitting recommendations to LWVNYS is February 1.

LWVNYS POSITIONS IN BRIEF: 2005-2007

Election Law

Support of measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise; open the political system by enacting a public campaign financing law for statewide offices; establish legal, ethical campaign guidelines; monitor campaign practices; simplify rules for ballot access.

Restore integrity to the election process – specifically support uniformity in election laws and procedures and in their implementation and enforcement; promote measures that ensure the integrity of all ballots; and support adequate funding for these procedures and for training of all involved election personnel.

Opposition to term limits for members of the NYS Legislature.

Opposition to term limits for NYS statewide elected officials.

Government

Support of standards to ensure equitable representation in the State Legislature and the Congress.

Support of improved measures to provide representation for legislative districts in case of a vacancy.

Support of responsive and responsible legislative processes which increase the role of the individual member and the committee system.

Support of effective lobbying and ethics regulation.

Support of procedural reforms in the constitutional convention process to promote openness and nonpartisanship.

Health Care

Support of measures to assure a basic level of quality physical and mental health care for all state residents including regulatory incentives to encourage development of cost-effective alternative methods of delivery; funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs; provisions for effective citizen participation in health policy decisions.

Support of measures that enable individuals to assume responsibility for their own health and to participate in decisions including termination of extraordinary life-extending procedures.

Support for uniform eligibility and coverage of basic health care costs through public financing.

Judicial

Support of a unified state court system with improved provisions for judicial selection.

Support of statewide guidelines for law enforcement at all levels to prevent racial and economic profiling.

Support of measures to improve pretrial procedures in the criminal courts.

Support of measures to promote a fair and efficient jury system.

Support of alternatives to incarceration.

Opposition to the death penalty, with life without parole as the primary alternative.

Natural Resources

Support for measures to achieve watershed protection including limiting pesticide uses and applying Best Management Practices.

Support for a state established, inter-governmental system for land resource management.

Support for a proactive role for New York State in regional land use planning, containing urban sprawl and protecting sensitive areas. .

Support of reconditioning of the New York State Erie/Barge Canal System and its development for recreational uses.

Social Policy

Support measures to meet the needs for low-income housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.

State Finances

Support reforms for greater equity in education financing for both pupils and the taxpayers.

Oppose in principle the use of public funds to support non-public schools, kinder-garten-twelfth grade.

Support of a uniform equitable assessment and property tax system.

Support of measures to provide for openness and accountability in the operation of the New York State public authority system.

Support of a timely and responsive state budget.

Support the funding of public higher education and the existing formula for financing the community system, 1/3 tuition, 1/3 state aid, and 1/3 county support.

Women's Issues/Social Policy

Support of measures which hold marriage to be an economic partnership with a presumption of equality between the spouses.

Opposition to measures that contain a presumption of joint custody of the children.

Support for equity in employment laws and practices and equal pay for jobs of comparable worth.

Support of measures to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic violence.

Support for measures to meet the needs for affordable and accessible housing through use of state funds and incentives to localities.

Note

These state positions are based on LWVUS principles and public policy positions. State actions on other items not covered under a state position can also be taken under LWVUS positions. Reproductive choices (Government position) and welfare reform (Meeting Basic Human Needs position) are two examples.

CONSENSUS ON FINANCING EDUCATION

With 25 local leagues (60 % of all NY State Leagues) participating in the study of Financing Education in NY State, phase I of the study resulted in consensus in 3 areas:

1- Provision of a sound basic education

The League favors implementation of educational efficiencies and best practices in the provision of New York's children in grades K-12 with a sound, basic education, which the League defines as the opportunity for a meaningful high school education, consisting of the basic literacy, calculating, and verbal skills necessary to enable them to eventually function productively as civic participants capable of voting and serving on a jury.

2- Raising Money by Progressive Means

The means for raising money to provide all New York's students with a sound basic education should be progressive, with those most able to pay paying at a higher rate. Any system of taxation should be stable (capable of producing a steady and predictable stream of income), simple to understand, transparent, and

exportable. As a general matter, any system of taxation should be designed to minimize special interest group exemptions, both with respect to individual and business taxpayers. To the extent that other cost-saving measures endorsed by the League are insufficient to fund the cost of a sound basic education for all New York's students, the League supports increase in the personal income tax as a means of raising sufficient funds.

To realize sufficient stability of education funding, the State should create a substantial reserve fund for education, sufficient to guarantee a continued stream of state revenues in times of economic downturn.

3- Local Property Tax Relief

The state should replace residential property tax relief programs which grant taxpayers relief regardless of ability to pay, with residential property tax relief based on need, with those having lower incomes receiving greater relief. Income and/or property limits placed on local tax relief should be adjusted automatically to reflect inflation, so that the relief continues to be reasonably related to need.

Phase II of this study, concerning charter schools, should follow soon. Our local committee will start its work on the matter of using gambling revenues for financing education soon.

Maria Eisner

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOMPKINS COUNTY: BOARD 200607

LWV NYS website
LWV US website
LWV-Tompkins County

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CLEAN ELECTIONS: ANTIDOTE TO UNHEALTHY CAMPAIGN FINANCING

Selected from an article in *The National Voter* by **Nick Nyhart**. The full article may be found at the LWVUS website: **www.lwv.org**

These days you need a score card to keep track of congressional money in politics scandals.

If there were ever a time to push hard for passage of *Clean Elections*, the public financing of elections, it is now. *Clean Elections* is already the law in seven states and two municipalities. Unlike other campaign finance reforms that typically seek to close loopholes through which special interest money makes its way into candidates' coffers, *Clean Elections* changes the way elections are financed. Candidates who qualify by raising a specified number of small contributions, typically five dollars, receive a grant of public money to run their campaigns. In exchange, they promise to take no more private money and abide by strict spending limits. *Clean Elections* levels the playing field so that qualified people who otherwise would not run for office can run competitive campaigns.

What does any of this have to do with DeLay, Cunningham, Jefferson and company? Imagine this: What if House or Senate

candidates had a source of disinterested money to run their campaigns? What if they didn't have to rely on the likes of convicted lobbyist Jack Abramoff to organize fundraisers and funnel cash their way? What if lawmakers could spend their time talking with constituents instead of wellheeled donors? *Clean Elections* would not cure every problem ailing the body politic, but it would certainly help.

Taking advantage of this moment of opportunity, the Public Campaign Action Fund has launched a campaign, "Seizing the Moment." One major prong of the campaign is a pledge drive designed to put candidates for public office on record on the issue of reform. In early July, several likeminded groups sent out letters to more than 1,000 congressional candidates asking them to sign a three-part pledge to support public financing and new disclosure restrictions on lobbyists' influence on members of Congress.

In the meantime, some members of Congress are already working on legislation to establish full public financing of congressional elections. In the House, Reps. John Tierney (D MA) and Raul M. Grijalva (D AZ) have introduced H.R. 3099, the Clean Money, Clean Elections Act, which has drawn the support of 38 cosponsors. At this writing, a similar bill is expected to be introduced in the Senate.

LWVTC CALENDAR—SPRING 2007

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| January 23 | GENERAL MEETING | Women's Community Building | 7:00 |
| | MARY RUSSELL—"REDISTRICTING" | | |
| February 5 | Board Meeting (Old Jail) | | 7:30 |
| February 24 | GENERAL LUNCHEON MEETING | Women's Community Building | noon |
| | LAUREN SIGNER | | |
| March 5 | Board Meeting (Old Jail) | | 7:30 |
| March 27 | GENERAL MEETING | TBA | 7:00 |
| | PAT CARBONE (tentative) from NYS Comptroller's Office: | | |
| | "HOW TO READ MUNICIPAL BUDGETS" | | |
| April 9 | Board Meeting (Kathy Burlitch) | | 7:30 |
| April 24 | ANNUAL MEETING | TBA | 7:00 |
| | JESSICA WISNESKI from Citizen Action of New York: | | |
| | "CLEAN MONEY, CLEAN ELECTIONS" | | |
| May 7 | Board Meeting (Charlotte Coffman) | | 7:30 |
| May 15 | SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION | | noon-9:00 |
| June 4 | Board Meeting (Tee-Ann Hunter) | | 7:30 |

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