



Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

January 2008

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Program Planning

It is time to review our Public Policy Positions and those of the LWVUS to identify issues for study. This is our chance to balance pros and cons, assess support, consider the viability of an issue, and decide if governmental action is the best way to address an issue. As a local League, we may:

- Review the LWVUS positions but recommend no change.
- Select a position for consideration for review or update.
- Propose a program item for concurrence (where members agree or disagree with a position statement), which must be supported with the title and scope of the position.
- Propose a new study.

Any of the above actions may result in an increase in Per-Member-Payment (PMP).

Please read Board Member Shelley Tamres' article on page 2 for information on a possible study topic.

The LWV Loudoun County positions and the US Positions in Brief are included with this newsletter. Complete and detailed US Public Policy Positions are at www.lwv.org, select "Library," then *Impact on Issues*. To participate in Program Planning, please complete and return the enclosed Report Form.

What is Program Planning?

Every two years state and local Leagues and ILOs participate in the LWVUS Program Planning process by making recommendations concerning program issues. This is how we remain a grassroots organization.

The Program Planning process is an important tool for identifying issues for study. It gives members and Leagues a chance to balance the pros and cons, assess possible support, and consider the viability of issues. During the process, members have the opportunity to organize support based on factual materials before the Program Planning deadline, March 1, 2008.

Waiting until the Convention to gather support for issues often results in limited discussion and incomplete information. Furthermore, raising issues at Convention instead of through the Program Planning process dilutes the voices of Leagues that do participate in the process.

From LWVUS Web Site

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Acting President's Column

I hope all of you are sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring. Board members will be calling to verify that we have your correct contact information and to see if you want to receive The Voter and other League communications via e-mail.

The Nominating Committee is looking for a few good women - and men - to serve on the Board of Directors. If you are interested, please contact Gem Bingol, 703-771-1645, gemingol@comcast.net.

Thanks to everyone who promptly sent in their dues renewals and added a donation to the League. Donations to the LWVLC Education Fund are tax deductible. Dues are renewable on the anniversary date of joining, so you will receive a dues renewal statement when your dues are payable. However, we need donations year round!

Marla McIntyre

Acting President
MarlaMcIntyreLWV@gmail.com

Who's on the Ballot Virginia Primary Tuesday, February 12, 2008

Republican Candidates

Ron Paul	www.ronpaul2008.com
John McCain	www.johnmccain.com
Fred D. Thompson	www.fred08.com
Mike Huckabee	www.mikehuckabee.com
Rudy Giuliani	www.joinrudy2008.com
Mitt Romney	www.mittromney.com

Democratic Candidates

Barack Obama	www.barackobama.com
Dennis J. Kucinich	dkucinich@gmail.com
Hillary Clinton	www.hillaryclinton.com
Bill Richardson	www.richardsonforpresident.com
Joe Biden	www.joebiden.com
John Edwards	www.johnedwards.com

LWVVA has posted the *2008 Presidential Primary Voters' Guide* and other information on the Virginia Primary at <http://lwv-va.org/vaprimar08.html>.

Eliminating "Spoilers"

By Shelley Tamres

Our current plurality (winner-take-all) voting system frequently results in a winner who is supported by fewer than a majority of voters in a three-or-more-way race. A Third Party or Independent candidate who draws more votes from one major party than the other usually creates a winner from the major party with the least support, i.e. the Third Party/Independent candidate is a "spoiler."

Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), aka Ranked Choice Voting or Preference Voting, is a ranked voting system that results in a majority-supported winner without the need for a separate, expensive, runoff election. Voters rank candidates for an office as first, second, or third choice, etc.). First choices are tallied. If no candidate receives more than 50%, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and those votes are redistributed to the voters' second choices. This continues until a winner receives a majority. IRV can:

- Eliminate "spoilers."
- Encourage voters to vote their conscience and discourage strategic voting.
- Encourage competition for public office.
- Encourage voter participation.
- Save tax dollars by eliminating runoffs (in jurisdictions that require majority winners).
- Discourage negative campaigning since candidates want their opponents' voters second choice votes.
- Create winners of single-member districts with majority support.

Six State Leagues have already adopted positions in favor of IRV as an election reform. The Loudoun County League is currently preparing input to the National League's Program Planning process. This is an opportunity for us to join with other State Leagues in asking for a national study on IRV by LWVUS. I hope you will consider joining me in urging LWVUS to create an IRV Study. To do so, note your recommendation on the Report Form included with this newsletter.

For more information about IRV and proportional representation voting systems, see: www.fairvote.org.

PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

League of Women Voters of the United States

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

Election Process

Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance. 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.

Selection of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct-popular-vote and work to abolish the Electoral College. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Congress and the Presidency

Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

United Nations

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

Trade

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

U.S. Relations with Developing Countries

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

Arms Control

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

Military Policy and Defense Spending

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Natural Resources

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

Resource Management

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources. Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management. Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Public Participation

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

Agriculture Policy

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

SOCIAL POLICY

Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

Equality of Opportunity

Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment and Housing. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

Fiscal Policy

Tax Policy. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

Federal Deficit. Promote responsible deficit policies.

Funding of Entitlements. Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

Health Care

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.

Meeting Basic Human Needs

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Income Assistance. Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

Support Services. Provide for essential support services.

Housing Supply. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

Child Care

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

Violence Prevention

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

Gun Control

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

Urban Policy

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

Death Penalty

The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

Public Policy Positions

Domestic Violence

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Adequate shelters for abused women and their children if the current shelter becomes insufficient.
- Emphasis on adequate programs and personnel in Loudoun County for counseling and rehabilitation of abusers as well as the abused.
- Continuing inclusion of education about spouse abuse and its causes, treatment, and prevention in the curriculum in the Loudoun County school system.
- Enforcement of existing state laws to protect the victims of abuse.

Education

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports adequate funding of public schools to ensure adequate teacher training and pay, safe and pleasant physical facilities, the development of well-rounded and challenging curricular and extra-curricular programs, and the development of special programs for at-risk children and schools.

More specifically, the LWVLC:

- Supports continuous curriculum units on Family Life Education for grades K-12.
- Supports the availability of adequate guidance services in public schools.
- Supports adequate funding for school libraries to maintain a high standard of quality.
- Supports competitive salaries for teachers.
- Supports local control of education by locally chosen school boards.
- health and/or safety.
- Opposes the Parental Rights Amendment or the inclusion of the Parental Rights Amendment language in any legislation.

- Supports Loudoun County Public Schools policies which prohibit student possession of any weapon for any reason while under school control or supervision.
- Believes that an effective public education assessment program should determine each student's progress, knowledge, and critical thinking skills in addition to determining the effectiveness of the educators and the curriculum. LWVLC supports a public education assessment program which:
 - o is non-threatening
 - o considers both a student's long-term and short-term performance
 - o measures strengths and weaknesses of students, teachers and the system
 - o considers class participation and in-class performance
 - o utilizes a "portfolio" of various examples of a student's work
 - o utilizes multiple assessments of a student's achievement
 - o utilizes a variety of assessment tools and techniques (such as objective and subjective tests, lab work, class projects, essays)
 - o Believes that an assessment program should ensure that each child reaches his or her full potential.

Land Use

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports and encourages the following positions:

- Development guidelines that aspire to the highest community standards, are sensitive to the integrity of social, economic and natural systems and are in harmony with the county's character and goals.
- Consideration of all purposes of zoning, as defined in the Virginia State Code, in local use decisions.

- Evaluation of long-term consequences of land use decisions, specifically on the environment (i.e., soil erosion, water quality and supply) highway congestion, the burden on the school system, fiscal impact, preservation of prime agricultural land, and scenic and historic resources.
- The legal doctrine of "presumption of legislative validity" as it is applied to land use decisions by local governments, based on the premise that local governing bodies are the appropriate decision makers, being closest to local conditions, and that it is the role of the courts to ensure fairness of the proceedings.
- Implementation of open space and environmental protection policies.
- Public acquisition of open space easements, especially in critical environmental areas, areas of scenic, natural and historic significance, and agricultural lands.
- Implementation of a transportation plan that results in a pattern of development consistent with land use and fiscal policies, and with consideration for the health, safety and convenience of local citizens.
- Adherence to the planning process, as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, the goals and purposes, as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, and the following elements of the Comprehensive Plan in particular:
 - o Preservation of the agricultural industry and the best agricultural soils to "preserve the cultural, social, economic, environmental and aesthetic amenities provided by agricultural land use;"
 - o Active County programs and policies to preserve open space and farmland;
 - o Density transfers from agricultural and open space areas to designated growth areas within a planning district, and the concept of Purchase of Development Rights;
 - o The budgeting and expenditure of county funds for agricultural land preservation programs including the strengthening of Agricultural and Forestal Districts.

- Provision of a range of housing opportunities for low and moderate income families.

Local Government

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Alternative methods of financing local government to lessen the reliance on real estate taxes for revenue.

Solid Waste Disposal

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports the following positions:

- Establishment of a program for the collection of hazardous waste by the county.
- The covering or containing of solid waste transferred through the county.
- Containment of any solid waste buried in the county to prevent contamination of the environment.
- Volume reduction of solid waste through recycling, reuse, alternative packaging, and sustainable consumption practices.
- Monitoring by an appropriate governmental group of burn temperature, air emissions, environmental impact of residue disposal in landfills, including air, water (surface and ground), and soil testing, when incineration is used as a method of solid waste disposal.

Water and Sewer

The League of Women Voters of Loudoun County supports and encourages the following positions:

- Protection of all watersheds serving Loudoun County in order to maintain purity of the drinking water supply and the health of in-stream aquatic systems.
- Payment of the costs of new community water and sewage systems by the users of each separate system.
- Regular pumping of septic tanks and checking of distribution boxes.



LWVUS PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT FORM

LWVUS Positions	Retain	Restudy	Update	Drop	Action
REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT					
Voting Rights					
Citizen's Right to Vote					
DC Self-government/Full Vote Representation					
Election Process					
Apportionment					
Campaign Finance					
Selection of the President					
Citizen's Rights					
Right to Know/Participation					
Individual Liberties					
Public Policy Reproductive Choice					
Congress/Presidency					
Congress					
Presidency					
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS					
United Nations					
Trade					
US Relations with Developing Countries					
Arms Control					
Military Policy & Defense Spending					
NATURAL RESOURCES					
Natural Resources					
Resource Management					
Environmental Protection/Pollution Control					
Air Quality					
Energy					
Land Use					
Water Resources					
Waste Management					
Nuclear Issues					
Public Participation					
Agriculture Policy					
SOCIAL POLICY					
Equality of Opportunity					
Equal Rights					
Education, Employment, Housing					
Fiscal Policy					
Tax Policy					
Federal Deficit					
Funding of Entitlements					
Health Care					
Meeting Basic Human Needs					
Income Assistance					
Support Services					
Housing Supply					
Child Care					
Early Intervention for Children at Risk					
Violence Prevention					
Gun Control					
Urban Policy					
Death Penalty					

Access Positions at www.lwv.org Select 'Library,' then 'Impact on Issues'

LWV LOUDOUN COUNTY PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT FORM

LWVLC Positions	Retain	Restudy	Update	Drop	Action
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
EDUCATION					
LAND USE					
LOCAL GOVERNMENT					
SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL					
WATER & SEWER					

Access positions at www.Loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/positions.html

If recommending an update or restudy of a current position (either US or LC) list the title of that position, explain why, how, and what changes you would like to see in the position.

To recommend a new study item (either US or LC), please write a brief summary of the scope of the study in 25 words or less. Please note the appropriate heading.

If you have a recommendation for concurrence, list the title and/or brief summary of the scope.

Proposing new studies, items for concurrence, or positions for review or update may result in increases in Per Member Payments (PMP).

Your response must be received by February 12, 2008

Mail to:

LWV Loudoun County

PO Box 822

Leesburg VA 20178

Or e-mail to:

league@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org

CALENDAR

2008

January

30 Wed. League Day at General Assembly, Richmond

February

Black History Month

1 Fri. Immigration Consensus due LWV US
 12 Tues. Presidential Primary, DC, MD, VA
 14 Thurs. **Happy Birthday, League of Women Voters**
 NCA Tour - Library of Congress
 contact andreagruhl@aol.com to register
 19 Tues. 7:00 - 9:00 pm Board of Directors Meeting, Bacchus
 Restaurant, Leesburg (open to LWV members)
 TBD Begin High School Voter Registration

March

Women's History Month

TBD LWV LC Tea

April

26-27 Sat.& Sun. VA State Council
 TBD High School "Meet Your Legislator"

May

3-4 Sat.& Sun. LWV VA State Council
 17 Sat. 9:30-2:00 LWV NCA Annual Meeting
 31 Sat. TBD LWV LC Annual Meeting

June

13 - 17 LWVUS Convention, Portland, OR
 TBD LWV LC Annual Meeting

League Web Sites

LWV US - www.lwv.org
www.vote411.org
 NCA - www.lwvnca.org
 LWV VA - www.lwv-va.org
 LWVLC - www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org
 LWVLC Webmaster e-mail - wm@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org
 LWVLC e-mail - league@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org

*There is a special place
 in hell for women who
 don't help other women*
 Madeleine Albright

*There's Nothing in the
 Middle of the Road but
 Yellow Stripes and Dead
 Armadillos*

•

*If the Gods Had Meant
 Us to Vote, They'd Have
 Given Us Candidates*
 Books by Jim
 Hightower

*Age is something that
 doesn't matter unless you
 are a cheese.*
 Luis Bunuel

*You cannot do a kindness
 too soon, for you never
 know how soon it will be
 too late.*
 Ralph Waldo Emerson

*The phrase 'working
 mother' is redundant.*
 Jane Sellman

*American youth at-
 tributes much more
 importance to arriving at
 driver's license age than
 at voting age*
 Marshall McLuhan

*How come we choose
 from just two people to
 run for president and 50
 for Miss America?*
 Unknown

*Nobody believes a rumor
 here in Washington until
 it's officially denied.*
 Edward Cheyfitz

Join the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

Please add my voice to the over 120,000 members and supporters nationwide!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

_____ \$60 Individual or _____ \$90 Family (payable to LWVLC)

Yes, I want to support the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County with a donation so it can continue its work to promote informed participation in government. Please make donation checks payable to the **LWVLC Education Fund**. Contributions to the LWVLC Education Fund are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Send to: Hatsy Cutshall, 20371 Cockerill Rd., Purcellville, VA 20132

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LOUDOUN COUNTY**

P.O. Box 822

Leesburg, VA 20178

(703) 777-9425

www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/

Marla McIntyre, Acting President

**To receive The Voter and other
League communications by e-mail,
please notify Marla McIntyre at
MarlaMcIntyreLWV@gmail.com**

January 2008