

League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri

PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

Short Form

Revised 2024

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The process used in formulating positions and acting at the grassroots level makes the League unique and sets the League apart from other organizations. The fact that we are members of not only a local League, but a state League, and the League of Women Voters of the United States, makes us a powerful force.

Our public policy positions are adopted at the National, State, and Local levels. Local Leagues are responsible for determining action at the local level, and state Leagues are responsible for determining action at the state level and ensuring that the action is consistent throughout the state. "Speaking with one voice" is one of the most important tenets of the League.

The League takes action on issues only after the membership has identified an issue for study, has formally studied the issue, and has come to a consensus or member agreement on the issue under consideration. The consensus report is published as the League position and is the basis for League action. Such positions can be the result of studies at the local, state, or national level. League chapters can adopt one another's positions through concurrence.

Local Leagues can use state and national positions, along with their local positions, to act in their communities. The LWV of Southwest Missouri Board is responsible for determining whether member understanding and agreement exists and whether the action makes sense in terms of timing, need, and effectiveness. The Board is committed to applying a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens to positions and the work that ensues.

The policy positions listed below include national ([LWVUS Impact on Issues](#)), state ([LWVMO Guide to State Action](#)) and local policies that serve as a foundation for current studies and action taken within Greene, Christian, and Webster counties.

For a complete list of our local policy positions, please view our [long form](#) archive.

Voter and Election Services

Voter Registration

National: (Impact of Issues, 2022-2024, pp 10, 11-12, 23-32)

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

State: (Guide to State Action, 2023-2025, pp 6-7, 12-17)

- The League of Women Voters of Missouri believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.
- (August 10, 2024) LWVMO has adopted through concurrence the League of Women Voters of Kansas City's positions relating to:

1. Automatic voter registration in compliance with the National Voter Registration Act
2. Defend LWV's right to third party voter registration
3. Defend against discriminatory voter registration roll purging
4. Assure that third party voter registration roll management must minimize disenfranchisement of eligible voters
5. Defend the rights of college voters

Voter Education and Outreach

National: (Impact of Issues, 2022-2024, pp 11-12, 23-32)

- The League's Position: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making.

State: (Guide to State Action, 2023-2025, pp 6-7, 11-25)

- Citizen Right to Know/Citizen Participation: Adopted from LWVUS 2023. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that government bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible. (Approved by concurrence proposed by LWVCBC at 2023 Convention)

Legislative Trackers

National: (Impact on Issues, pp 10-11, pp 52-55)

- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government 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.
- Representative Government: Promote an open government system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.
- Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation: Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making."

State: (Guide to State Action, pp 7, 12)

- Citizen Right to Know / Citizen Participation: The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends on informed and active participation at all levels of government.

- The League further believes that government bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible

Social & Economic Issues

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

National: (*Impact on Issues*, pp 14)

- Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. Support equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Statement of Position on Equality of Opportunity. (p 122)
- The LWVUS believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment, and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.
- The LWVUS supports federal programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged people.
- The LWVUS supports federal efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education, employment, and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems.
- The LWVUS supports equal rights for all regardless of sex.
- The LWVUS supports action to bring laws into compliance with the ERA:
 - a) to eliminate or amend those laws that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex;
 - b) to promote laws that support the goals of the ERA;
 - c) to strengthen the enforcement of such existing laws.
- The LWVUS supports equal rights for all under state and federal law.
- The LWVUS supports legislation to equalize the legal rights, obligations, and benefits available to same-gender couples with those available to heterosexual couples.
- The LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law.
- The LWVUS believes that the civil status of marriage is already clearly distinguished from the religious institution of marriage and that religious rights will be preserved.

DEI Policy: (Jan. 2024 adoption) Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity, or marital

status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission/achievements as well.

State: (*Guide to State Action*, p 53)

- LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice to all persons, regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policymakers in creating a more perfect democracy.

Local: (Adopted July 2024)

- Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission/achievements as well.

Education

National: (*Impact on Issues*, pp 131, 132)

- "The League of Women Voters believes that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children from pre-K through grade 12. **A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right.**"
- LWVUS is a member of the National Coalition for Public Education, which **opposes vouchers.**

State: (*Guide to State Action*, p 10)

- Support for equal opportunity in education, access to quality programs and adequate financing for pre-K through 12.
- Support public schools that have accountability and transparency in matters of governance, accreditation, and funding.

- Support holding charter schools to the same requirements, certifications, student services, teacher training, classroom materials and leadership as all other public schools in Missouri.
- Oppose charter school expansion until such time as the same standards are applied to all schools receiving public funding

Libraries & Censorship

State: (*Guide to State Action*, p 11)

- Support a public library system as a basic community service including internet access, with a long-term assured, stable, and adequate funding source.
- Support access by all persons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society.

Both the local and state leagues view **censorship** as a first amendment issue and have signed on to the [Right to Read Coalition](#).

Environment & Sustainability

National: (*Impact on Issues*, pp 91-96, 110)

- 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.”
- To assure the future availability of essential resources, government policies must promote stewardship of natural resources. Policies that promote resource conservation are a fundamental part of such stewardship. Resources such as water and soil should be protected. Consumption of nonrenewable resources should be minimized. Beneficiaries should pay the costs for water, land, and energy development projects. Reclamation and reuse of natural resources should be encouraged.”
- The League supports the preservation of the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment. The League’s approach to environmental protection and pollution control is one of problem solving. The interrelationships of air, water, and land resources should be recognized in designing environmental safeguards. The League’s environmental protection and anti-pollution goals aim to prevent ecological degradation and to reduce and control pollutants before they go down the sewer, up the chimney, or into the landfill.”

- The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet.

State: (*Guide to State Action, pp 41-51*)

- Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources. Air quality in Missouri should be protected and promoted, taking into account air pollution caused by motor vehicles, power plants, factory farming, waste disposal, and other challenges to our environment.
- Support for state government recognition of climate change as a critical threat to the planet and for state action to address this important problem
- Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation, and encourage the use of renewable resources. Support energy goals and policies that both acknowledge the United States as a responsible member of the world community and support actions by appropriate levels of government to encourage the uses of renewable resources and energy conservation.
- Support strong provisions to fulfill state and local governments' responsibility for hazardous and solid waste management.
- Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship. Support the adoption and implementation of long-range land use plans and regulations by state, county and municipal governments which incorporate sound policy development based upon the goals, needs and resources of each locale. Effective land use management requires adequate financing, involvement of professional planners and increased public information and participation.
- Support of a comprehensive water policy, one that includes the public trust doctrine.

Gun Safety

National (*Impact on Issues p15*)

- 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.

State (*Guide to State Action p10*)

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