



## LWVUS PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT FORM 2008

*Indicate which one of the following you have a recommendation for: Review an existing Position, New Study or Program Item, Concurrence, or No Recommendation. **You may choose only 1 option.***

**A. REVIEW** – Is there any LWVUS position (see Public Policy Positions in Brief) your League proposes for review? Leagues may select one LWVUS position for consideration for review each biennium. If adopted, a Review Committee will be appointed to examine the position and, if appropriate, suggest changes and updating.

\_\_\_ **Proposed Review - Review Health Care.** By review we mean **to update materials and to promote education at the local and state level rather than redoing the entire study.** (under Social Policy)

\_\_\_ **OTHER REVIEW?**

**B. NEW STUDY/PROGRAM ITEM** – If your League has a recommendation for **one** study item, *please write a brief summary of the scope of the study in 25 words or less under the appropriate heading below, or choose one of the 2 studies proposed by other Leagues:*

1. Representative Government

\_\_\_ **Proposed Study: “The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”**

2. International Relations

3. Natural Resources

4. Social Policy - Education

\_\_\_ **Proposed Study:” What role should the federal government play to support a public education system that provides opportunity for all to reach their highest potential and develop patterns of life-long learning and responsible citizenship?**

\_\_\_ **OTHER NEW STUDY?**

**C. No New Study**

\_\_\_ We discussed the issues but have no new Study or Review to recommend at this time.

(over)

**D. CONCURRENCE** - If your League has a recommendation for a concurrence with another League's position, fill in the appropriate information below:

**Not Applicable**

**(The League of Women Voters of Salt Lake has received no requests for concurrence.)**

1. Title and/or brief summary of the scope
2. Name and location of the local or state League study/position with which your League is recommending concurrence.

# 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.**

*February 2008 LWVSL Units*

## **NATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Along with local program planning, we also do national program planning this year. We can choose to review any current LWVUS program item or add a new one. This year other Leagues have invited us consider three issues that are important in the national debate: a new LWVUS **study** (either Public Education or National Popular Vote for President) and an LWVUS **position review** (Health Care Position). Or we can suggest our own study or review.

We are reminded that only one new study or one new position review can be recommended to LWVUS from the Salt Lake League, which will be done by combining unit responses to the **LWVUS Program Planning Report Form** included with this material. (Individuals who cannot attend a unit may fill it out and send it to the League Office.) We need to receive your suggestions by **February 28**. Here is background material on a suggested Position Review and two suggested New Studies

### **HEALTH CARE REFORM – Position Review**

HCR4US has been informed that to encourage LWVUS attention to health-care reform more broadly and actively, local Leagues should ask that health-care reform be recommended as a Review item for 2008-10. Local Leagues may do this when completing their program-planning forms which are due March 1. A Review will allow for the updating of our present health care position without the funds, time, and human energy required for an entire new study.

Therefore we urge that you include the Review of health-care reform as one of your recommended items. **Please add that by “Review”, you mean “to update materials and to promote education at the local and state level rather than redoing the entire study.”** ("Review" is the first category on the program planning response form.)

If there are a sufficient number of such recommendations, and if enough delegates vote for health-care reform as a Review item at the Convention, the LWVUS staff will then be able to devote the time and energy needed to get this vital work done, although we understand that LWVUS would appreciate funding assistance.

HCR4US is a group of over 200 LWV members across the nation. A steering committee of about 15 members has "met" in monthly conference calls since the 2006 LWVUS Convention to promote education and inform League members and staff, and the public, about the LWVUS health-care position and ways to implement it.

We are very grateful that the LWVUS Board elevated health care to the status of a priority item in early 2007 and that the LWVUS staff worked so hard to get more SCHIP funds to try to enable more children to get the health care they need and deserve. But we know that the health-care crisis in our nation, as well as the health-care position of the LWVUS, requires even more work on more fronts.

Please contact us at [HCR4US@yahoo.com](mailto:HCR4US@yahoo.com) or call 978-443-8609 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
 HCR4US Steering Committee members  
 Health Care Reform for the US  
<http://www.hcr4us.org/>

*Just in case you have not been following the US health care issue closely, here are some facts about our country's situation. Some reports date back a few years, but count on it, stats have not improved since these reports were written.*

1. Over 46 million Americans are uninsured and at least that many are underinsured.
2. In 2004, Elizabeth Warren of Harvard Law School published a study showing that 50% of all personal bankruptcies followed a medical crisis. And of those people filing personal bankruptcy, 75% had health insurance ("Sick and Broke", Elizabeth Warren, Miami Herald, 2/12/2005)
3. Family insurance premiums in the United States are averaging more than \$9,500 per annum. (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005)
4. Insurance is tied to employment in the USA. If you lose your job, you lose your insurance. Health insurance should be portable and lifelong.
5. The U.S. is the only developed country that does not offer universal health coverage to its residents. Plus the USA has higher infant mortality and lower life expectancy rates than the other developed countries with universal coverage. (United Nations UNDP Human Development Report, 9/7/05)
6. There are more than 9 million children (one in nine) in the USA who are uninsured.  
<http://www.childrenshealthcampaign.org/>
7. Health care costs are draining municipal and school budgets all over the country (check your local area to see what percentage of their costs are going to health care coverage of their employees.)
9. Small businesses are straining to provide any coverage at all for their employees, thus making them less competitive.
10. Many independent contractors and family-owned business owners do without any health care coverage at all for themselves or their employees due to high health care coverage costs.

11. Physicians for a National Healthcare Program (PNHP) maintains that under a "Medicare for All" plan, the U.S. could save almost \$300 billion in total health care costs while providing universal coverage for all. (<http://www.pnhp.org/>)

12. In 2004, total health care spending accounted for 15.3% of the United States GDP. The average for other industrialized OEDC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries was 8.9%. (<http://www.oecd.org/>)

13. In recent elections, health care was mentioned as one of the most important concerns in the minds of the electorate (just after the war in Iraq) in many national polls.

14. In every car that GM makes, approximately \$1500 goes toward the health care costs of its employees. This high cost provides strong incentives for American businesses like GM to take their manufacturing plants to countries like Canada which already have a national health care plan for its citizens (Washington Post, 2/11/05).

15. Co-pays and deductibles continue to rise for those who have insurance. Insurance companies shift the rising cost of health care to patients.

Finally, health care should be a right of all those living in the USA, not a commodity that is distributed and sold to those who can afford it and leaving those who can not afford it without any health care coverage.

For more information check the web sites of PNHP (<http://www.pnhp.org/>) and Health Care Now ([healthcare-now.org](http://healthcare-now.org)) - both strong advocates for universal, single payer health care.

Now is the time for the LWV to become a strong voice in support of universal single payer health care reform. We remind you, and please remind your local League, that the LWVUS has a position in favor of universal single payer health care. Now is the time to act. Start with your own local and state League!

Sincerely,  
HCR4US Steering Committee  
(Health Care Reform for the United States)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Health Care Reform 4 US is a network of individual LWV members and acts in alignment with LWVUS position on Health Care for purposes of public education and advocacy. We may need to act quickly and are not structured to consistently employ the LWV consensual and approval process. We will not use the League name in any materials or public communications.*

## NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE FOR PRESIDENT – New Study

The League of Women Voters of New York State respectfully requests Leagues across the country to recommend the adoption (at the National Convention in 2008) of a National Study entitled:

**“The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”**

Leagues are urged to recommend this exact wording when returning their Program Planning Report Forms to LWVUS by March 1st. The forms are available at the LWVUS website under: For Members – Council & Convention – Program Planning. Direct link is:

[http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Program\\_Planning&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=153&ContentID=9577](http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Program_Planning&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=153&ContentID=9577)

*Why we are making this request*

### **NY State Delegates Embraced Study of Compact for NPV**

After lobbying and caucusing, delegates attending the NY State Convention in May 2007 enthusiastically adopted the non-recommended study: *Should NYS Join the Compact for a National Popular Vote?* By the time of the final vote at the Sunday morning plenary session there was only one “no” vote. The motion to adopt the study more than met the requirement of support from 3/5 of the voting delegates. In June, the NPV State Study Committee began its research. The timetable approved by LWVNYS board required that all study materials including consensus questions would be out to local Leagues by the end of January 2008. In fact, the NPV study guide is near completion.

### **Background on NPV**

Under the U.S. Constitution, the states have exclusive and complete power to allocate their electoral votes, and may change their state laws concerning the awarding of their electoral votes at any time. Under the National Popular Vote bill, all of the state’s electoral votes would be awarded to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill would take effect only when enacted, in identical form, by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough electoral votes to elect a President—meaning 270 of 538.

As of November 11th, the bill has 366 legislative sponsors in 47 states. 43 bills have been introduced in all but 8 States and **10 Legislative Chambers Have Now Passed the Bill:** Maryland became the first state to enact the National Popular Vote bill on April 10, 2007. The bill has also passed the Hawaii House (35-12) and the Hawaii Senate (19-4). The bill has passed the Colorado Senate and the Arkansas House. On May 2, 2007 The Illinois House of Representatives passed the National Popular Vote bill. On May 14th the California & the North Carolina Senates passed the National Popular Vote bill. Clearly, the time is ripe to study this issue so that we know whether we support using a compact as a method for electing the President by National Popular Vote.



## **LWVUS Decides LWVNYS Cannot Adopt a Position on NPV**

While conducting their research, the NPV Study Committee heard from Leagues across the country that they had been told that they could/should not do the NPV study for a variety of reasons. This concerned the NPV study committee and on September 17th requested clarification and assurances from LWVUS. On October 25th, after four months of work, LWVNYS was notified by our LWVUS liaison that LWVNYS could not adopt a position on the NPV because a State cannot adopt a position on a National issue. Many are distraught that LWVUS allowed us to spend precious resources on this endeavor. For four months, local Leagues have been holding education sessions, publishing articles, and educating ourselves about the NPV compact. Leagues reported that the study was generating a lot of interest from current, as well as potential new members.

### **So that the League of Women Voters-US can build on the foundation of our work, we ask Leagues to:**

1. On the Program Planning Report Form: in the section New Study/Program Item, under the heading Representative Government, enter: New Study worded **“The Advisability of Using the National Popular Vote Compact among the States as a Method for Electing the President.”**
2. Help us spread the word to your League contacts across the country.
3. Let us know if you will recommend the study to LWVUS so we can track our lobbying efforts.
4. Send delegates to LWVUS Convention June 13-17, 2008 to vote in favor of study.

In order to see why this idea merits further consideration go to:

<http://www.lwvny.org/npv.html> or go to <http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/index.php>. For more information contact: Lori Dawson, LWV Saratoga, [ldawson@skidmore.edu](mailto:ldawson@skidmore.edu), 518-580-0547 or Carol Mellor LWV Hamptons, <mailto:camellor@aol.com>

**Thank you for considering our request.**

**Sincerely,**

**Martha Kennedy, LWVNYS President**  
**Joann Ross, LWVNYS Director, Citizen Education**  
**Lori Dawson, LWVNYS NPV Study Chair**

## **Selection of the President <sup>1</sup>**

The League's History

A League Study of the presidential electoral process culminated in a 1970 position supporting direct election of the President by popular vote as essential to representative government. The League testified and lobbied for legislation to amend the Constitution to replace the Electoral College with direct election of the President, including provisions for a national run-off election in the event no candidates (President or Vice- President) received 40 percent of the vote. The measure, which passed the House and nearly passed the Senate in 1971, has been revived in each

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<sup>1</sup> League of Women Voters of the United States of America “Impact on Issues 2006-2008” (ONLINE), Washington, D.C.: LWVUS, publication #386, 10/10/07  
[http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/ImpactIssues/2006\\_Impact\\_web.pdf](http://www.lwv.org/Content/ContentGroups/ImpactIssues/2006_Impact_web.pdf)

Congress without success. In 1997, the LWVUS again called for abolition of the Electoral College and for direct election of the President and Vice-President in testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Constitution. The League has supported national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections to ensure equity for voters from all states and to facilitate the electoral process.

### **What Leagues Can Do:**

#### **RECOMMEND A NEW STUDY at LWVUS**

In February 2001, a memo was sent to the state and local Leagues outlining the League's position on the Electoral College under the LWVUS position on Selection of the President. The League believes strongly that the Electoral College should be abolished and not merely "reformed." One "reform" which the League specifically rejects is the voting by electors based on proportional representation in lieu of the present "winner-takes-all" method. Such a system would apportion the electoral votes of a state based on the popular vote in that state. Instead of making the Electoral College more representative, such proportional voting would increase the chance that no candidate would receive a majority in the Electoral College, thereby sending the election of the President to the House of Representatives where each state, regardless of population, would receive only one vote. Election of the President by the House further removes the decision from the people and is contrary to the "one person, one vote" principle. The League also does not support reform of the Electoral College on a state-by-state basis because the League believes there should be uniformity across the nation in the systems used to elect the President.

At the 2002 Convention, the League voted to expand and update the position. The League came to concurrence on a new position in June 2004. Our new position takes into account the entire presidential selection process and supports a process that produces the best possible candidates, informed voters and optimum voter participation.

### **The League's Position**

*Statement of Position on Selection of the President, as Announced by National Board, January 1970, Revised March 1982 and Updated June 2004:*

**The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The League of Women Voters believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. The League also supports uniform voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election. We support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates and their positions, public policy issues and the selection process itself. The League supports action to ensure that the media, political parties, candidates, and all levels of government achieve these goals and provide that information.**

## EDUCATION – New Study

The five Santa Clara County Leagues urge us to consider a study of education using the wording:  
**"What role should the federal government play to support a public education system that provides opportunity for all to reach their highest potential and develop patterns of life-long learning and responsible citizenship?"**

(The following comes from Roberta Hollimon, Chair)

"Why do we need a LWV national position on education?"

The federal government has been involved in public education since the early days of our nation. In the past the LWVUS has been able to advocate based on our existing Social Policy Position (herein).

Our current positions allow us to advocate at the federal level for equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in education. The LWVUS in 1972 supported Title I, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal aid. At the national level the League also worked to oppose anti-busing/anti-desegregation initiatives in Congress.

In 1974-76 LWVUS program added the phrase "equal access to...quality education," reflecting League recognition that "equality" and "quality" ultimately are inseparable.

In 2002, Congress passed NCLB, amending existing law, in an effort to increase educational achievement and make schools accountable through assessments and sanctions. The law requires reauthorization every five years and LWVUS has no position that would allow us to have a voice in this debate on accountability, curriculum, teacher qualifications, governance, etc.