

# **The League of Women Voters of Utah**

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**IMPACT ON  
UTAH ISSUES  
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## **PRINCIPLES**

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

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.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in his right to vote, that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that the development of international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## **THE LEAGUE MAY TAKE ACTION ON THE BASIS OF THESE PRINCIPLES.**

League of Women Voters of Utah  
3804 Highland Drive, Suite 8-D  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84106

December 1, 1989

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The League of Women Voters of Utah exists to encourage, educate, and empower citizens to affect the political process at the state level of government. Fundamental to League is its grassroots process whereby the members, not the leaders, reach decisions about the issues League will study and action it will advocate.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

Objectives relating to government:

- To study issues at the state level in a thorough and objective manner
- To reach positions by means of membership consensus or concurrence on issues studied
- To take action to bring about changes consistent with League positions

Objectives relating to the public:

- To educate the public about the electoral process
- To provide nonpartisan information about candidates seeking state office
- To provide objective information to the public about state League issues

Objectives relating to membership:

- To provide an environment for members to become politically knowledgeable through research and discussion
- To encourage members to become more active in the political process
- To provide experiences for members to gain skills in creative problem solving, critical thinking, and leadership.

## FOREWORD

This review of League of Women Voters of Utah Statements of Position gives a brief history of governmental issues chosen as program items by members and adopted at state conventions for concerted study and action.

The statements are the culmination of a process that begins with annual program making and proceeds with the gathering of study material by a resource committee, with discussion in unit meetings or in a general meeting, and, by ballot, resulting in consensus or concurrence of the members. State League action is authorized by either state or national statements of position. Action may include support of legislative measures or development of public support for League positions.

For detailed guidelines on program procedures, formulating positions and League action, refer to the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) publication In League.

## CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF STUDIES

Following is a list of studies and fact sheets the LWVU has published since its re-organization in 1952. Studies which yielded consensus are preceded by an asterisk \*

- 1953 Know Your State Survey
- 1955 "Utah's Finances and You" Part I
- 1956 "Utah's Finances and You" Part II  
"Utah's Finances and You" Part III
- 1957 A Survey of Public Welfare in Utah Part I  
(Administrative Assistance Programs)
- 1958 A Survey of Public Welfare in Utah Part II  
(Bureau of Services for Children, Juvenile Courts, Institutions, Additional Mental Health Services in Utah, and Relationship of State, Federal and Voluntarily Supported Social Welfare Agencies)
- 1959 Juvenile Courts and Detention Facilities in Utah  
Your Schools and Your Money
- 1960 \*Water Resources  
Budgetary Procedures Review
- 1962 \*Review of Utah Election Laws and Procedures Part I  
\*Review of Utah Election Laws and Procedures Part II
- 1963 Reapportionment in Utah  
\*State Functions in Supervision and Financing of Public Schools in Utah  
Part I (Supervisory Function)
- 1964 Action (A guide to taking action on issues in Utah)  
\*State Functions in Supervision and Financing of Public Schools in Utah  
Part II (Financing)  
Election Laws and Procedures Update
- 1966 \*Constitutional Revision  
\*Update on Consensus on Schools
- 1967 Development of Human Resources
- 1968 The State We're In  
\*What's New in the Air?  
Utah State Government (Questions and Answers on the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, the Judiciary and Administrative Reorganization)
- 1969 Water in Utah  
\*Innovations in Utah Schools Part I
- 1970 \*Innovations in Utah Schools Part II (Report on League Go-See Tours of Innovative Schools)  
\*Aspects of Utah's Drop-Out Problem  
\*Vocational Education in Utah  
\*Air Quality Control--A Progress Report
- 1971 \*A Study of the Utah State Courts  
\*Unified Judicial System

- 1972 \*Reorganization of School Districts in Utah Proposed Changes in School Financing
- 1972 \*Land Use, Future of a Fading Frontier
- 1974 Migrant Farm workers in Utah  
Health Services in Utah  
\*Oil-Shale Development
- 1975 \*The Quest for Energy: An Overview
- 1976 \*The Quest for Energy: Socioeconomic and Environmental Impacts  
\*Crime and ? Part I (The Adult Offender)  
\*Crime and ? Part II (The Juvenile Offender)  
\*Crime and ? Part III (A Look at Change)  
\*Proposed Utah Recall and Advisory Recall Act  
Women: Past, Present, and Future
- 1977 Health Services in Utah--Recent Developments  
Wanted: More Homes
- 1978 \*Crime and ? (Postscript)  
\*Making Sense of Your Tax Dollars  
\*Making Sense of Your Property Taxes  
"The Voice of Womankind" - An Historical Perspective of Equality in Utah
- 1979 \*Making Sense of Taxation Changes in Utah
- 1980 \*Challenges of the Future for Utah's Water Policies  
\*Challenges of the Future for Utah's Water Policies Part II  
\*Reapportionment in Utah--Political Game or Fair Representation
- 1981 A Profile of Hazardous Waste in Utah  
The Need for Concern about Hazardous Waste in Utah  
A Citizen's Guide to Hazardous Waste Action in Utah  
Utah Water Issues - Challenges of the Future  
Utah Water Issues - Water Law and Water Rights  
Utah Water Issues - Instream Flows  
Utah Water Issues - Growth and Water Reallocation  
Utah Water Issues - Water Brokering and Banking
- 1982 \*Marital Property Rights  
\*The Crossroads in Utah Education
- 1984 \*Utility Rates and Regulation: A Look at Energy Economics and Energy Policy  
\*The Child Care Challenge
- 1985 \*Democracy at Work - A Study of Utah's Election Laws and Procedures
- 1987 \*The Job Training Partnership Act and Its Impact on Utah Women
- 1988 \*Education: An Increasingly Essential Cornerstone for Economic Prosperity
- 1990 \*Wanted: A Home, Still the American Dream?
- 1992 \*Understanding Utah's Tax System. 1992 Tax Study

- 1994 \*Impacts of Coal Mining on the Kaiparowits Plateau
- 1996 \*Election Law Update: Voting and Voting Rights
- 2000 \*Crime, Punishment and Rehabilitation Revisited: A Study of the Utah Department of Corrections
- 2002 \*The Utah Juvenile Justice System
- 2003 \*Taxation for Utah Water Delivery and Development
- 2005 \*Political Decisions and Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah
- 2006 \*Hate Crime Study  
\*Redevelopment Agency Study
- 2009 Reapportionment in Utah: The Fair Boundaries Initiative  
\*Water Use in Utah 2009
- 2013 \*Funding Utah Public Education
- 2014 \*Relocation of the Utah State Prison at Draper
- 2015 \*Understanding Utah's Tax System 2014 - An Update of League of Women Voters of Utah 1992 Study

## GOVERNMENT

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive; that has a fair and adequate fiscal basis; that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution; and that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making.** (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-1988*)

## REORGANIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports more efficient state government with well-defined lines of authority.**

### **History**

The study of state government organization adopted by the 1967 state convention was a natural outgrowth of the League's previous study of the Utah Constitution and incorporated the support positions that had been reached in that study.

The League study, *The State We're In*, gave a question and answer review of the three branches of state government affected by the 1967 consolidation acts. The study concluded that consolidating acts fail to simplify governmental structure or define lines of authority. In 1969 the legislature further reorganized the Departments of Social Services, Natural Resources and Development Services, eliminating the Coordinating Council. The League supported consolidation of still other state agencies not affected by the 1967 legislation and further consolidation within the three new departments.

### *\*LWV Position on Reorganization of State Government*

*The goal of reorganization of state administrative departments should be to increase the authority of the governor and, in order to provide suitable checks and balances, to strengthen the role of the Legislature. The type of administrative structure best designed to meet this goal is a single departmental executive, appointed and removable by the governor. The governor should have authority to initiate administrative reorganization.*

## THE UTAH CONSTITUTION

### *\*LWV Position on the Utah Constitution*

*Utah's Constitution is in need of massive revision. It should be redrawn into a document that is clear, concise, confined to fundamentals and up to date.*

*A constitutional convention should be called.*

*Since revision through convention is of necessity a slow process, a limited number of interim amendments will be supported provided the League has consensus on the specific question.*

*The Legislature should not sit as the convention.*

### **History**

After defeat of the call for a constitutional convention in 1966, which the League supported, the League turned its attention to revision of the Constitution by amendment.

In 1966, the League supported three successful amendments providing for annual sessions of the Legislature, increased compensation for legislators, mandatory retirement of judges and removal of judges from office. In 1970, the League supported an amendment to liberalize residency requirements for voting and the Gateway

Amendment to permit revision of the Constitution article by article rather than section by section. Both of these amendments were successful.

The League supported two of the constitutional amendments on the November 1972 ballot: the legislative article revision and the removal of the requirement that first and second class cities must have their own school districts.

The League supported abolition of the Board of Examiners. This board has been abolished.

The League also supported establishment of a merit system for state employees; this, too, has been instituted. In 1984, the League supported a successful amendment once again raising legislative pay.

By 1985, the Utah Legislature had power to call itself into session only for the purpose of voting to override a gubernatorial veto. The League has supported its having this power under any circumstance.

### *\*LWV Position on Methods of Changing the Constitution*

*The League is concerned about the method of change in our present Constitution. We feel that it may be necessary to make the following changes in the present document in order to facilitate the adoption of a new constitution:*

- *Proposals made by the convention should require only a majority of those voting on the question for adoption. The same rule should apply for the convention call.*
- *It should be possible to vote on a new constitution at a special election.*

### *\*LWV Position on a Constitutional Convention*

*The League feels that a constitutional convention in Utah should be established as a bipartisan body with an equal number of delegates from each party plus some delegates endorsed by both parties. In order to assure equitable representation of all areas of the state, the convention should include delegates apportioned by one type of legislative district, either House or Senate, plus delegates-at-large. The convention should be kept to the smallest feasible number that would meet constitutional requirements and assure bipartisan representation, equitable apportionment and at-large representation.*

### *\*LWV Position on Strengthening the Legislature by Constitutional Change*

*The League believes that Utah Legislature needs strengthening in order to better cope with present day problems and to serve as the primary control of the executive branch of government.*

#### *Recommendations*

- *The Legislature should meet annually with sufficient time in session to meet the needs of the state.*
- *Members of the Legislature should receive adequate pay. It is our belief that salaries should be set through statutory law but that no increases should become effective during the term voted.*
- *Legislators should have adequate staff.*
- *There should be a strong committee system with adequate staff and continuing responsibility between sessions.*
- *A post-audit should be conducted annually of all state funds. Such audit should be made by an auditor appointed by and responsible to the Legislature.*
- *The Legislature should have the power to call itself into session.*

### *\*LWV Position on Executive Rights and Responsibilities*

*The Utah Constitution charges the governor with the responsibility for the execution of the law. The League believes that he should have the necessary tools and organization to exercise that responsibility.*

#### *Recommendations*

- *The governor should have the power to appoint and remove administrative officers at the policy making*

- level. This should include board members.
- Without making specific recommendations, the League supports the principle of consolidation of departments into a number within the span of control of the governor. The Utah Constitution should establish this principle.

## A UNIFIED JUDICIAL SYSTEM

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports the concept of a state unified judicial system with clear lines of authority, responsibility and accountability.**

### **History**

Most of the principles upheld by the League were accomplished in the Judicial Articles Revision for Utah, passed in 1984.

### *\*LWV Position on the Judicial System*

*The League believes that a unified judicial system encompasses the elements of single administrative head, a single simplified organizational structure, a single set of rules and procedures, a single financing system and consolidated budget.*

*The League upholds the following procedures for a unified judiciary system:*

- *All courts are courts of record. (This improves the quality of lower courts and eliminates the costly, time consuming practice of trial de novo.)*
- *Clear lines of accountability should be enforced to enhance justice in peace courts.*
- *High standards of performance and legal training should be upheld in peace courts.*
- *The Juvenile Court system should continue to be coordinated statewide, with centralized authority in the Board of Judges. The function of an advisory committee, the office of courts administrator and systematic collection of data should be maintained.*

## ELECTION LAWS AND PROCEDURES

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports fair and equitable election laws, liberal residency requirements for voting, fair reapportionment, year-round voter registration and a shorter election process.**

### **History**

At its state convention in 1961, the League adopted review of Utah's election laws and procedures as part of its program. A two part study was done in 1962 and 1963 with an update in 1964. Consensus was reached and the League worked active for several years on the following issues:

1. Reapportionment - The 1972 Legislature reapportioned the Legislature and the State Board of Education, and the 1971 Legislature ordered City and County Commissions to reapportion local school boards.

Art. IX, Sec. 2, of the Utah Constitution, required a census be taken in Utah every ten years, beginning in 1905. Present officials believe that the requirement was intended at that time to coincide with the federal schedule of census-taking, but the federal census has always been taken on the decade year. The state law, which would therefore require a census every five years, has never been enforced nor has the legislature ever appropriated any money to do so. However, the requirement remains in the Constitution. The League has always supported firm,

fair and equal reapportionment following each ten-year census.

2. Voting - Year-round voter registration at the County Clerk's office is now available, and there are also roving registrars. There are provisions for absentee registration by mail. If a voter has not voted in his district for four years, he is required to re-register.

Under rules set by federal court decisions, the time of residency in the state was reduced from six months to 30 days, and the requirement of 60 days residency in the county was eliminated. A proposed constitutional amendment on voting qualifications was put to Utah voters in November, 1976. Its purpose was to bring the Utah Constitution into conformity with federal law and actual practice in Utah. The League supported this.

3. There is no mandatory training for election officials but training is offered.

4. State and county party officials are now elected in odd-numbered years, and candidates are chosen in even-numbered years.

5. Annual Sessions - A constitutional amendment approved in 1968 provided for annual sessions of the legislature, in odd-numbered years a 60 day general session and in even-numbered years a 20 day budget session. In 1984, voters approved another amendment to set one 45 day general session each year.

6. State Board of Education - The 1972 Legislature provided for nomination of the State Board of Education by petition only and eliminated the nominating conventions. The number of signatures required on petitions was increased from 50 to 100 by the 1965 Legislature. Primary elections are now held for both state and local school board candidates.

In 1979, League convention elected to study election laws. Part I, Reapportionment, led to consensus in 1980 which supported a bipartisan commission.

In 2011, League convention approved a position based on the Salt Lake League study, "Elections: Candidate Selection."

*\*LWV Position on Election Laws and Procedures (1961 Study)*

1. *The League of Women Voters of Utah favors equitable apportionment to be arrived at automatically. We feel that the several states should take the responsibility for such equitable apportionment but that the Supreme Court of the United States should retain the right to declare such apportionment inequitable or decree suitable remedies if the states fail to act.*
2. *The League strongly supports year round centralized voter registration and suggests that voter registration information be more readily available. In order to implement our goal of uniformity of residence requirements for voter in all states, we urge support of the following recommendations of the President's Commission of Registration and Voting Participation, presented December, 1963:*
  - a) *Voter registration should be easily accessible to all citizens.*
  - b) *State residence requirements should not exceed six months.*
  - c) *Local residence requirements should not exceed 30 days.*
  - d) *New state residents should be allowed to vote for President.*
  - e) *No citizen's registration should be cancelled for failure to vote in any period less than four years.*
  - f) *States should provide absentee registration for voters who cannot register in person.*
3. *The League continues to urge adequate training for all election officials.*
4. *The League favors the present system which requires candidates to declare before mass meetings, but we*

*urge even further shortening of the whole election process, local, state and national, in order to increase interest and citizen participation and to lower expenses. We approve the election of party officials in years other than those in which candidates for public office are chosen.*

5. *We approve an annual session of the legislature and an annual budget.*

**\*LWV Position on Election Laws and Procedures (1985)**

1. *Registration. The League of Women Voters of Utah supports the present registration system which provides a variety of ways for citizens to register to vote including:*
- *in-person registration*
  - *by-mail registration*
  - *volunteer registration assistants*
  - *registration by interested organizations*
  - *registration days with paid registration agents*

*However, the League believes that the present systems could be improved in the following ways:*

*There should be more information about various methods of registration and location of by-mail registration forms.*

- *The registration form should be simplified.*
- *Consideration should be given to making registration days more effective by reducing the number of days, by centralizing registration locations or by other methods.*
- *Citizens should be able to register to vote when they apply for a driver's license.*

*At 1997 state Convention the following position was **deleted**:*

- *“The League is opposed to registration on Election Day.”*

2. *Campaign Finance. The League of Women Voters of Utah believes that the public has a right to know the source of candidates' campaign funds. We believe that candidates for the Utah legislature should be required to file campaign financial statements both before and after the election. In addition, all candidates for county and municipal offices should be required to file financial statements.*

*The League believes that Political Action Committees (PACs) should be required to register with the Lieutenant Governor's Office, to report their membership and to file financial statements.*

3. *Candidate Selection. (position amended 2011). The League of Women Voters supports a candidate selection process that permits and encourages the maximum participation of candidates and voters throughout the candidate selection process. We believe that the state primary should take place in September. We are opposed to registration by party affiliation and to the institution of a presidential primary in Utah.*
4. *Elections. The League of Women Voters of Utah believes that there should be more public information about the location of polling places in Utah. We believe that training for election officials should be mandatory. We also believe that voting district size should be allowed to vary by county.*

**\*LWV Position on Reapportionment and Redistricting (1980)**

*The basic criteria for reapportionment and redistricting are the standards of each citizen's right to vote, the equal value of each vote, and effective representation regardless of where that citizen resides.*

*Recommendations*

*The League supports meeting strict anti-gerrymandering standards including:*

- *prompt judicial review*
- *basic equality among districts*
- *district lines that honor local political boundaries*
- *district lines that are compact*
- *district lines that are not drawn for the purpose of advantage or disadvantage of any political party, incumbent, or any person or group*
- *lines that do not dilute voting strength of any minority*
- *addresses of incumbents, political affiliation of registered voters, previous election returns, or demographic information other than population should not be used in redistricting.*

*The League supports establishing a bipartisan commission that would serve in an advisory capacity to the Legislature. The Legislature would approve a final plan that would be subject to approval by the courts.*

*The League supports an amendment to the Utah Constitution, Article IX, Sec. 1-4, to bring it into line with present practice, eliminating the unenforced five year census and subsequent reapportionment. The amendment would require balanced legislative districts, establish a bipartisan commission and set up guidelines supporting the one-person one-vote principle.*

*Action on election laws should be based on LWVUS principles.*

## UTAH STATE TAXATION

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports a state tax system that is fair and equitable; that provides adequate resources for government while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes; is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance; and accomplishes its objectives without creating undue administrative problems. (Convention '84, LWVUS)**

**Taxes should be both adequate and fair for all those paying them. (LWVU 1978)**

**Income taxes should be more progressive. Tax brackets should be spread so that the top rate is reached at a higher income level and the tax rate on higher incomes should be increased. Exemptions from sales taxes should be periodically reviewed, and subject to cost benefit criteria. Property tax exemptions should be removed from the constitution. (1992)**

**Property taxes should be assessed equitably, with annual reappraisal if it is financially feasible. Public understanding of property taxes is vitally important. (LWVU 2013)**

**Earmarks should be used with restraint and be subject to sunset provisions. Fees are an increasing portion of government revenue and should be considered with taxes in budgeting, financial hearing and reports. Reductions in tax revenue in the form of exemptions, credits, and deductions should be regularly assessed. (2014)**

### **History**

The 1977 state convention approved League studies, "Making Sense of Your Tax Dollars" (1978) and Making Sense of Your Property Taxes (1978). An update, Making Sense of Taxation Changes in Utah, was published in 1979. In 1980, the League opposed a property tax exemption amendment.

“Understanding Utah’s Tax System - 1992 Tax Study” an update was published in 1992. Consensus was used to support elimination of the state sales tax on food, expansion of the circuit breaker, and a severance tax on coal.

In 1993 and 1994, the League used consensus to support bracket changes to make the income tax more progressive and legislative review of sales tax exemptions. The League continues to believe the Tax Limitation Act should be repealed and to oppose a constitutional amendment limiting taxes and spending.

In 2006, a bill was passed reducing sales tax on food over a 3 year period. The League continues to oppose sales tax on food.

In 2013, The League study, “Funding Utah Public Education” addressed how taxes affect public school funding in Utah, including how property taxes subject to equalization have declined.

“Understanding Utah’s Tax System 2014 – An Update of League of Women Voters of Utah 1992 Study” covered changes in the tax system since 1992 and added government fees to the subjects studied.

#### *\*LWV Position on Utah State Taxation*

*The most important criteria for evaluating taxes are adequacy and equity. A major consideration from the standpoint of government is adequacy, or whether the tax produces the necessary amount of revenue. (1978)*

*From the point of view of the taxpayer, it is important that taxes are fair and equitable both for those in similar economic circumstances and those at different economic levels. Other important criteria are benefits received, stability, responsiveness and simplicity. Taxpayers should receive adequate benefits, either direct or indirect, from taxes they pay. There should be a mix of stable taxes, which produces a predictable amount of revenue regardless of economic fluctuations, and responsive taxes, which increase or decrease according to the ups and downs of the economy. A tax that is easy to understand and comply with is more acceptable than one that is not. (1978)*

*The main strength of the Utah tax structure is that it is broadly based and well balanced. The main weakness is the regressiveness of the sales tax on food, which places an undue burden on low income and elderly people. (1978)*

*Earmarking of taxes for a specific purpose is appropriate in some cases, but should be used with restraint so that flexibility is not limited. If a tax is earmarked, there should be a logical relationship between the tax and its use. (1978)*

*Earmarks should be subject to a sunset provision. (2014)*

*Based on cost-benefit analysis, reductions in the number of exemptions should be made. Exemptions for charitable organizations should be narrowed. (1992)*

*Fees and taxes should be considered together in budgeting, financial hearings and reports. (2014)*

*Property tax exemptions should be removed from the Constitution and enacted by statute. (1992)*

*The most significant advantages of the local property tax are that it is a stable and predictable tax and that it has a direct relationship to local benefits and maintains local control. The main disadvantage is that it is a regressive tax which is difficult for taxpayers with limited or fixed incomes to pay. (2013)*

*The state reappraisal program is necessary so that property will be assessed equitably. The goal should be annual reappraisal if it is financially feasible. (2013)*

*Utah property taxes provide a sizeable part of public education funding and have long been subject to equalization programs to ensure all students in Utah have a reasonably equivalent public education. Equalization has significantly declined and the variation in funding levels between districts has significantly increased. Equalization should be increased across Utah public education to ensure all Utah students have a reasonably equal education. (2013)*

*Centrally assessed property is valued by the State Tax Commission and that value has an impact on the rate paid by residents and businesses with the county. County assessors should have the right to protest valuations of centrally assessed property located in their counties. (2014)*

*Utah income taxes should be more progressive. (1992)*

*The rate of corporate income tax should be raised. (2014)*

*All current sales tax exemptions should undergo periodic review, and there should be a formal procedure for review of proposed sales tax exemptions. (1992)*

*The cost and benefit criteria used to evaluate proposed sales tax exemptions should include: The number of new jobs created if the exemption is granted; the median wage level for newly created jobs; other additional tax revenue if exemption is granted; lost sales tax revenue; perceived fairness to other taxpayers; and environmental impact. (1992)*

*Transportation should be funded by a combination of transportation-related fees and taxes as well as the General Fund. (2014)*

*There should be a severance, or mine occupation, tax on nonmetalliferous mining (mainly coal). (1978) Existing rates of severance taxes on other minerals should be raised. (2014)*

### **Recommendations**

*The League believes that drastic and arbitrary tax limitation is not necessary to Utah, but it favors a reduction in government spending through careful budgeting and efficiency. The League continues to oppose constitutional and statutory limitations on taxation and spending because they result in lack of flexibility to cope with current problems. Prudent control of taxes and spending is the responsibility of elected official. (1978)*

*The sales tax on food should be either eliminated or reduced gradually until it is eliminated. (1992)*

*The sales tax should be broadly based and reflect the overall economy. (1992)*

*The sales tax base should seek to mitigate regressive impacts. (1992)*

*The sales and use tax should be administratively simple and promote compliance. (1992)*

*The sales and use tax should not be earmarked. (1992)*

*Taxable property should be uniformly appraised at its fair market value. The appraisal system should be professionally administered and adequately funded. (1992)*

*Property tax administration should be simple and understandable, providing the public with adequate information on and full access to valuation, tax changes, and the appeals process. (1992)*

*Property tax exemptions should be carefully scrutinized. (1992)*

*Property tax should recognize the unique status of residential property. (1992)*

*Property tax laws should promote uniformity in the taxation of mobile personal property. (1992)*

*Taxpayers should get full information on their valuation notices and tax notices so that they can gain a clearer understanding of their taxes. Notices should be available both to the mortgage holders and to the property owners. (2013)*

*The League believes that the property tax provides essential local revenue and is an important component of Utah's broad based tax structure. (1978)*

*Expansion of the circuit breaker should be available to give property tax relief to all low income households regardless of age of the owner. (1992)*

*The numerous overlapping taxing areas should be simplified. (2013)*

*Tax exempt property should be listed and appraised, and the information should be published. (2013)*

*Each public school student should have an adequate education. Property tax equalization programs should be robust enough to ensure that Utah students receive an equitable education opportunity. (2013)*

*The state income tax system should be broadly based and shield subsistence income from taxation. (1992)*

*The overall state income tax system should be indexed for inflation. (1992)*

*The state income tax system should be linked to the federal income tax system. (1992)*

## **REDEVELOPMENT AGENCIES**

*\*LWV Position on Redevelopment Agencies (2007)*

Based on "Redevelopment Agency Study" (2006)

*The League of Women Voters of Utah supports local government having the necessary powers, including narrowly-restricted eminent domain capability, to improve blighted areas of a community. Such powers are important in areas with significant physical or social problems which block redevelopment through normal market forces.*

*The League supports local government having limited powers to encourage economic development. Redevelopment and economic development should be undertaken within clearly stated parameters, including years of tax investment and budget.*

*The League supports measures that will require greater transparency in the operation of redevelopment agencies, especially requiring agencies to produce standardized annual reports with descriptions of projects undertaken and annual audits of financial activity by project area. Such reports, which include tax receipts, administrative cost, debts, project specific expenditures and benefits, should be made available free to the public both electronically and at public libraries.*

## **ENERGY AND TAXATION**

(See Energy Development in Utah.)

## **UTILITY REGULATION**

*\*LWV Position on Utility Regulation (1984)*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah believes that the utility regulatory structure in Utah provides for effective consumer representation but is not fully used. More staff, expert testimony, and independent analysis could strengthen the consumer voice. We recommend increased regulatory tax assessments to more adequately fund the regulatory agencies, particularly the Committee on Consumer Services. More active consumer participation in the regulatory process should be encouraged by the state through public information and education.*

*The League supports appointment rather than election of Public Service Commission members. The check-and-balance effect of gubernatorial appointment and senate confirmation is more likely to result in qualified, knowledgeable, and impartial commissioners. The Commission has a responsibility to both ratepayers and utilities and is more insulated from special interest pressure if members are appointed.*

*The League is aware that there are many complex factors involved in determining utility rates. We believe the cost of service should be a primary consideration in setting rates, but the encouragement of conservation is vital. Incentives in the rate structure, such as peak-load pricing, should be used to encourage efficient energy use.*

*The League recognizes that basic energy utility services are essential to members of modern society. Financial assistance for those unable to pay for these services should be provided primarily by taxpayers through government social services. In addition, we support voluntary contributions to assistance programs and believe ratepayer subsidization of low income consumers should be considered.*

*The League believes that the State of Utah should take action to influence the cost of utility services by:*

- Increasing state and public participation in planning and regulating future energy sources.*
- Encouraging energy conservation by education, economic incentives, weatherization, and use of alternative energy.*
- Funding the regulatory process adequately to ensure sufficient independent expert testimony and analysis.*
- Assisting low-income consumers to meet basic utility needs.*

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources. (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*)**

### **History**

The interest of the Utah League in protecting environmental quality stems from early studies in the areas of water resources and air quality. League studies have expanded to include land use, energy, and waste management. The 1978 State Convention changed the name of the area from Environmental Quality to Natural Resources to reflect a name change at the national League level. Action to promote an environment beneficial to life has been taken under positions established by both LWVUS and LWVU. In 1994, State Council approved a study "Impacts of Coal Mining on the Kaiparowits Plateau" which led to further consensus on natural resource protection and management.

*\*LWV Position on Natural Resource Protection and Management (1994)  
Based on "Impacts of Coal Mining on the Kaiparowits Plateau" (1994)*

*The League believes that protection and management of natural resources are responsibilities shared by all levels of government. The League supports comprehensive long-range planning that takes into consideration environmental, public health, safety, social and economic impacts of development.*

*The League supports*

*Environmentally sound use of energy resources, with consideration of the entire cycle of energy production;*

*Identification and regulation of areas impacted by public or private investment where siting results in secondary environmental and socioeconomic impacts;*

*Reclamation of lands damaged by surface mining, waste disposal and other activities such as road or rail building;*

*At least partial payment by beneficiaries (developers) for the cost of infrastructure required for project operation.*

*The public has a right to participate in decision-making at each phase in the process and at each level of government involvement. Officials should ensure that the public has adequate information to participate effectively. Public records should be readily accessible at all governmental levels.*

## AIR QUALITY

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Support measures to reduce vehicular pollution, support regulation and reduction of pollution from stationary sources (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*). Support for the purposes of the Utah Air Conservation Committee and a clean air program based on health, economic and aesthetic justifications.**

### **History**

In 1965, the League of Women Voters of Salt Lake studied air pollution and published "What's In The Air?" The 1967 State Convention authorized a study of air pollution, leading to publication in 1968 of "What's New In The Air?" an updated edition of the Salt Lake study. In 1970, "Air Quality Control--Progress Report" brought members up to date on federal and state plans to implement air quality laws.

*\*LWVU Position on Air Quality*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah recognizes that air pollution requires immediate and vigorous abatement procedures. League members support the purposes of the Utah Air Conservation Committee and believe that a clean air program should be based on health, economic and aesthetic justifications.*

*The program should include:*

- *Mandatory establishment of state air sheds, with multi-county action required among counties with the same air shed.*
- *Allowance for local standards to be set higher than state standards.*
- *Authority for the Utah Department of Health to take emergency action during air pollution alerts.*
- *Opportunity for any appropriate local agency to apply for available federal funds, with coordination for such action through the Utah Department of Health.*
- *State laws prohibiting removal or deactivation of pollution control devices on motor vehicles.*
- *State laws requiring periodic inspection of pollution control devices, possibly in conjunction with annual vehicle safety inspections.*

## ENERGY

*LWV Position in Brief*

**Support reduction of energy growth rates; use of a variety of energy sources, with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies; the environmentally sound use of energy resources (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*). Action to develop Utah's energy resources in ways that protect the environmental, social and economic needs of our citizens and citizens of the nation.**

### History

The 1973 State Convention authorized a study, Oil Shale Development, published in November, 1974. The 1974 National Convention set up an energy task force, which in 1975 presented a national statement on energy conservation for concurrence by state and local Leagues, with which Utah concurred.

The LWVU also concurred with a statement on energy vs. a quality environment formulated by a coalition of state Leagues calling themselves the "Six for VIII," (the six states of Utah, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota that are in Federal Region VIII).

The 1975 State Convention approved the action item "Action to protect environmental quality in the state of Utah" and authorized a study of the "socio-economic and environmental impact of proposed energy development in Utah." The three resulting publications were *The Quest for Energy: An Overview*, *The Quest for Energy: Finances*, and *The Quest for Energy: Socio-Economic and Environmental Impacts*. Consensus was reached in December, 1975.

*\*LWVU Position on Energy Development in Utah (1975)*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah, fully cognizant of the problem of energy supply and demand in the state and in the nation, recognizes that Utah possesses many resources that can be used in the solution of this problem. The League is concerned that these resources be used in a way that protects the environmental, social and economic needs of our citizens and citizens of the nation.*

*The League believes that local governments possess the best information about their particular communities and thus have the primary responsibility for initiating and implementing thorough planning for community needs in areas facing the impact of growth due to energy development. Communities should bear the cost of capital improvements as much as possible, but they should require contracts with developers regarding providing for community needs.*

*Counties should cooperate with municipalities and with each other in planning for growth and should share revenues with impacted communities. State law should enable this type of cooperation, even across county lines.*

*The state of Utah should maintain guidelines for local communities to follow in planning for orderly development and should offer them technical and planning assistance. The state should give direct aid to local units of government for capital improvements with guidelines to insure that the revenue is used properly. Standards of accountability should be part of the formula for distribution of state funds. State law should allow a variety of uses for front-end money paid by a developer to a community. A state severance tax on energy sources should be levied.*

*The federal government has a responsibility to assist regions in which the impact of energy development crosses state lines. Early financial assistance and planning guidelines for impacted communities should be provided.*

*The developer of an energy resource has the major responsibility to an impacted community and to its own employees for planning and providing services as needed. The developer is also responsible for accurate and timely impact and technical data, submitted in writing at regular intervals to the local government. It is preferable that industry recognize this responsibility and voluntarily comply by exchanging information with local government; however, if this responsibility is ignored or abused, the League of Women Voters of Utah supports legislation to require compliance. The developer is further responsible for meeting environmental standards as required by state and federal law.*

*Consumers must share the financial cost of meeting energy demands, but they should be allowed to participate in the decision making process. Consumers have the primary responsibility to conserve energy.*

*The present system of siting energy resource development is inadequate and inefficient. It does not always allow full citizen participation in decision-making. The League supports formation of an agency at the state level to consolidate and coordinate many such siting decisions, but only if it provides a system of checks and balances among government, private interests and citizen, and provides for adequate citizen participation at all stages of the process.*

***\*LWV Position on Energy Conservation/Concurrence with LWVUS (1975)***

*Energy conservation must be a part of any national or state energy policy.*

*Public understanding and cooperation are essential to the success of any program of energy conservation; citizens should be involved in the difficult choices that must be made.*

*Implementation of energy conservation must*

- *take full account of economic consequences;*
- *distribute costs and hardships as fairly as possible without bearing unduly upon the poor; and*
- *give full consideration to the environment.*

*Wise use of energy resources will*

- *buy time to decide on other long range energy related policies and programs, and*
- *enable Americans to act as responsible citizens of the world community.*

***\*LWV Position on Energy vs. Quality Environment (Regional Concurrence)***

*High priority should be given by federal, state and local governments to determine the real nature of the energy crisis. Energy producing companies and related industries should cooperate fully. A national energy policy should follow, developed with participation from public and private sectors representing many facets of American society, with awareness that the standard of living does not necessarily reflect the quality of life. Massive research into more efficient methods of using energy should be initiated.*

*Surface mining should be prohibited on land which cannot be returned its original or a higher use; the responsibility to demonstrate that there can be satisfactory land reclamation should rest with those companies and individuals developing our natural resources.*

*The use of ground or surface water by surface mining companies in actual mining or by attendant industrialization must not degrade water quality in a way that others cannot use and enjoy it, whether for agricultural and municipal use, recreational and aesthetic values, or any other purpose. Consideration must be given to the effects of excavation and spill banks in raising and lowering the water table and to the ability of soils to retain enough water to support vegetation. Contaminants such as sulfur, fluorides, mercury, and trace elements should not be allowed to drain into either surface or ground waters. Depletion of water from ground or surface sources in a way that harms others should be prevented.*

## LAND USE

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Management of land as a finite resource; land-use planning that reflects conservation and wise management of resources (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*). Support for state land use planning, state minimum standards for land use, and planning assistance to local governing bodies; support for multi-county regional planning.**

### History

In 1972, a state study, Land Use, Future of a Fading Frontier, was published. LWVU lobbied for a land use bill introduced in the 1974 legislature. Although it passed, it was defeated by referendum in the November, 1974 election.

### *\*LWVU Position on Land Use*

*In order to promote the wise use of land and related resources in Utah, and in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment, the League favors increasing the capacity of local governing bodies to deal with land use problems by:*

1. *Augmenting the role of state government to include:
 
  - a) *the setting of minimum standards regarding environmental protection, cultural preservation and aesthetic land uses;*
  - b) *provisions for technical and planning assistance to local and regional governing bodies;*
  - c) *setting up of machinery to facilitate enforcement of general planning provisions.**
2. *Encouraging multi-county regional planning bodies to deal with environmental impacts that exceed county boundaries.*
3. *Establishing a land use planning committee, with statewide representation, whose purpose is to determine, with the assistance of local input, state land use goals and policies.*

## WASTE MANAGEMENT

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Support policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes; support policies to ensure safe treatment, transportation, storage and disposal of solid and hazardous wastes (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*).**

### History

Waste management has been addressed by most local Leagues in Utah under national League positions. In 1981, LWVU co-sponsored a workshop on hazardous waste management and produced three briefs: "A profile of Hazardous Waste in Utah", "The Need for Concern About Hazardous Waste in Utah", and "A Citizen's Guide to Hazardous Waste Action in Utah". A slide-tape presentation "Confrontation with Hazardous Waste" was also prepared for the League.

LWVU participation in the siting of high level nuclear waste disposal facilities is based on LWVUS "Criteria for Siting Waste Disposal Facilities." (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*)

- ample and effective opportunities for public participation, including funding to conduct such participation;
- evaluation of economic, social and environmental impacts so that decision makers and the public have adequate information on which to base a decision. In addition to the actual site, secondary land use impacts, such as buffer areas, adequacy of roads, sewers, water, etc., should be considered;
- an examination of alternative sites and methods of treatment and disposal. Comparison of costs must include short- and long-term costs, such as liability insurance, post-closure maintenance, monitoring of ground and surface waters and air before and after closure, and potential loss of land or water resources due to contamination;
- participation and review by all governmental levels to assure conformance with all adopted comprehensive plans at each level of government; and
- procedures for resolution of intergovernmental conflicts.

Hazardous and radioactive waste treatment, storage or disposal facilities should be sited in areas that pose the least amount of risk to the public and to sensitive environmental areas. They should be located away from areas of critical concern such as:

- natural hazard areas subject to flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes or subsidence;
- drinking water supply sources, such as reservoirs, lakes and rivers and their watersheds and aquifers and their recharge areas;
- fragile land areas, such as shorelines of rivers, lakes, streams, oceans and estuaries, bays or wetlands;
- rare or valuable ecosystems or geologic formations, significant wildlife habitat or unique scenic or historic areas;
- areas with significant renewable resource value, such as prime agricultural lands or grazing and forest lands that would be destroyed as a result of the siting of hazardous waste facilities; and
- residential areas, parks and schools.

## RADIOACTIVE WASTE STORAGE IN UTAH

*\*LWVU Position on Radioactive Waste Storage (2005)*

Based on "Political Decisions and Nuclear Waste Storage in Utah" (2005)

*The LWV supports the 1990 law that created a process for approving commercial landfill waste sites for garbage, hazardous and radioactive waste. The law requires approval by all of the following: local officials, the state Division of Radiation Control, the Legislature and the Governor. Further, the League supports prohibiting storage of higher levels of low-level radioactive waste in landfills without approval of both the Legislature and*

*the Governor. Public input must be part of the decision-making process.*

*The League supports:*

- *Frequent review and adjustment of nuclear waste taxes and regulatory fees.*
- *Legislation to increase the interval between service on regulating bodies and employment by regulated industries from 2 years to 5 years in order to decrease conflicts of interest.*
- *Adequate dedicated perpetual care funds for all radioactive waste storage facilities vital to assure public safety for at least a century beyond site closure.*
- *Regulation and supervision of any new mill tailings sites created when dormant or new uranium mines are brought into production.*

*The League has safety concerns about transportation of high level nuclear waste into and through the State of Utah.*

## **WATER RESOURCES**

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Support measures to reduce water pollution; support policies to achieve water quality; support stringent controls to protect the quality of current and potential drinking-water supplies (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*). Support for public access to water management institutions and for precedence of the public interest in water law and water rights decisions. Support for the efficient and environmentally sound use of water resources.**

### **History**

The first LWVU water study, Water Resources, was published in 1960. It resulted in active League support for the development of a state water plan, improved water quality standards, and adequate financing of implementation.

In 1969, Water in Utah updated the 1960 study and stressed river basin planning. "Challenge of the Future for Utah's Water Policies," Parts I and II, published in 1980, complemented earlier studies and stressed future water policy. Five fact sheets on Utah Water Issues were published in 1981: "Challenges of the Future", "Water Law and Water Rights", "Instream Flows", "Growth and Water Reallocation", and "Water Brokering/Banking".

In 2009, the League of Women Voters undertook a study of the waters of Utah and their use. Members were concerned about the state's water future in view of the high probability of water scarcity and population growth. We believe that current per capita water use is unsustainable but also believe it is unnecessary and even extravagant. We believe people can and will change their ways with education, careful planning, and wise laws. Our members support both behavioral and technological changes as ways to reduce water use and protect the environment.

We also wish to be strong advocates in all levels of government for the environment for its own sake and because it is essential to our wellbeing. In 2009 the League questioned the state's reliance on the concept of water as private property, as it did in the League water study of 1981. We recommend a rethinking of this historic water law. We find this and other aspects of the 1981 study are as relevant today as they were then. As in 1981, all interested parties in Utah must revisit and revise existing water laws and institutions in order to create a system that will work for the future.

### *\*LWV Position on Water Resources (1969)*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah*

- *recognizes the need for coordinated river basin planning; and*

- supports enforcement of water pollution abatement measures.

***\*LWVU Position on Water Resource Management (1981)***

*The League of Women Voters of Utah recognizes that water laws and water management institutions affect the future development of Utah. The League believes that the public must be involved in regulatory and policy decisions about water at the state and local level. Government has a responsibility to encourage public participation and to create mechanisms for public access to these institutions. Appointed members of water policy and regulatory boards should reflect a variety of interests and should serve a limited number of terms.*

*The Safe Drinking Water Committee and Water Pollution Control Committee should promulgate and enforce regulations as well as formulate state policy. Their membership should reflect a balance of geographical representation as well as public and private interests. The League supports changes to increase the number of members who represent the public on water policy and regulatory boards.*

*The Board of Water Resources should have a broad citizen representation. The League supports the concept of geographical representation on this board, but also supports changes in composition to better reflect population.*

*Water Conservancy District Boards should be made more representative of the public they serve by use of criteria and guidelines for appointment, by direct election of members and/or by limiting the number of terms members may serve.*

*The League believes that the state should maintain a current survey of all water resources, ground and surface, and a current adjudication of water rights. We support adequate state funding to implement these functions. The state of Utah should establish a policy for water rights conversions; this policy should incorporate land use considerations.*

*The League supports changes in Utah water law to (1) permit "public interest" to take precedence over "first in time" as criteria for granting any remaining unappropriated water rights, (2) permit appropriation of water rights for a defined time period, and (3) include "instream flows" as a water right. The Utah Legislature should periodically establish a definition of "public interest".*

*State and local government should encourage, and when necessary require, water conservation. Public education programs are a necessary first step towards conservation.*

*We support dual water systems as an efficient use of water. We support changes in laws governing dual water systems, including but not limited to health and safety precautions, health department approval and placing both culinary and outdoor systems under the same management.*

***\*LWVU Position based on "Water Use in Utah" (2009)***

*Utah water policies should be structured to address human needs while protecting the integrity of water tables, lakes, streams, wetlands and their attendant wildlife. Instream flows and conservation pools should be established for the state's natural waters.*

*Environmental safeguards must recognize the interrelationships among water, air, land resources and wildlife.*

*Stringent controls must ensure protection of surface supplies and recharge areas for principal aquifers and the overall integrity of the surface and ground water in our water basins.*

*The public must understand the limits of our water resources and the costs to the environment and the economy of our current and projected water use.*

*Water conservation should preferentially result in enhancement of the natural environment rather than be directed only to growth and economic development. Sustainable economic development should be conditioned on the availability of water for projected use.*

## **WATER TAXATION**

### *\*LWVU Position in Brief*

*The LWV of Utah has positions on water conservation and planning strategies which should enable future generations to live on a limited water budget without threatening the health of the natural environment. We favor policies that support a safe and reliable water supply for our citizens. A stable revenue flow to pay for water delivery infrastructure must be in place. Since user fees may be unstable or burdensome, especially in times of drought and under regimens of strict conservation measures, additional revenue sources that are not tied to rates of consumption may be necessary. Although state sales tax and local property taxes have been a traditional support for water districts in Utah, other sources might be more equitable, for example assessments on each water account or hook-up.*

### *LWVU Position based on “Taxation for Utah Water Delivery and Development” (2004)*

*Any water policy or fee should meet the following standards:*

- 1. Transparency - easily identified and understood*
- 2. Voter approval - approved by direct vote of the citizenry or elected representatives*
- 3. Time limitation - Subject to time limits or scheduled sunset review*

*Furthermore, a robust public discussion on water policy is critical in a state where water is limited, rapid growth is predicted, and competing environmental and lifestyle choices must be considered.*

## SOCIAL POLICY

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty. (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*)**

### **History**

The forerunner of this item was a civil rights program adopted by 1964 League State Council. The program's title was change to Human Resources in 1971 and in 1984 to Social Policy. Studies, fact sheets and surveys have been done by LWVU on public welfare (1957 and 1958), juvenile courts and detention facilities, and corrections (1959, 1976, 1978, 2000, 2002), education (1963, 1964, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1982), human resources (1967), migrant farm workers (1974), health services (1974, 1977), housing (1977), women's issues (1976, 1978, 1982), child care (1984), and bias crimes (2006). Position statements have been issued on Education, Corrections, Marital Property Rights, Child Care, Juvenile Justice and Bias Crimes. Action in the Social Policy area has focused primarily on Education, Housing, Child Care, Welfare, Corrections and Women's Issues. Prior to 1982, with the exceptions of Education and Corrections, action was based on LWVUS positions. However, the 1982 Marital Property Rights and 1984 Child Care consensus have given the LWVU more state positions with which to work.

## EDUCATION

### **Public Schools**

### *LWVU Position in Brief*

**The League of Women Voters of Utah supports adequate financing of the public schools to ensure quality education.**

### **History**

The 1963 state convention approved a study of state function in supervision and financing of public schools. Two studies were published: Supervisory Function, Part I, in 1963, and Financing, Part II, in 1964. There was an additional brief study on incentive pay in 1966. In 1972, an update on school financing was published. Consensus was reached in the 1978 study "Making Sense of Your Property Taxes." (See GOVERNMENT: Property Taxes and School Financing for position statement.)

In 1969, research was expanded in three areas: innovations in elementary and secondary schools, vocational training and juvenile dropouts. Studies produced were Innovations in Utah Schools (1969), Report on League Go-See Tours of Innovative Schools (1970), Aspects of Utah's Dropout Problem (1970) and Vocational Education in Utah (1970). By 1984, all major provisions of this last study had been achieved. The LWV continues its support for vocational education.

Anticipating the need for a clarified position on reorganization of school districts, the 1971 state convention directed a mini-study, "Reorganization of School Districts in Utah," which was completed in 1972.

The League supported the deletion of Article X, Sec. 6, from the Utah State Constitution, removing the requirement that cities of the first and second class be required to establish separate school districts. This would also allow a combination of a city with the county school district if desired by the people. (In 1972, voters approved a constitutional amendment ending this requirement.)

The 1982 LWV study, “Crossroads in Education,” reevaluated the quality of education in Utah. As a result of this study, education positions from the past twenty years were updated.

For 20 years, the League advocated the use of ADM (average daily membership) instead of ADA (average daily attendance) in determining funding for school districts. This was achieved in the 1984 Legislature

Anticipating that rapidly expanding school populations would drive public school growth, the League recommended changes to school funding mechanisms, changes to traditional classroom schedules, increased public involvement through community councils and consolidation of school districts. The League also supported quality public core education topics, critical thinking skills, as well as other values.

The 2013 LWV study, “Funding Utah Public Education,” provided a detailed look at public education funding from 1993 through 2011.

***\*LWVU Position on Education (2013)***

Based on “Funding Utah Public Education” (2013)

*I. The League supports additional funding for public education. The amount of spending on education per \$1,000 of personal income has dropped continuously from 1995. The League supports increases in basic funding which can be most efficiently managed locally by school districts and schools.*

*II. The League supports increasing equity in public education funding through increased state level funding and substantial increases to the percentage of property taxes subject to the basic levy.*

*III. The League supports specialized funding for some students, such as students who primarily speak a foreign language and/or students who live in poverty. At the same time, the League urges public education officials to ensure that all students are not shortchanged by specialized funding. The League also supports more funding for pre-school through third grade students who can benefit from early education programs.*

*IV. The League supports transparency in public education funding programs, including:*

- Transparency, disclosure and recusals for legislators with conflicts of interest*
- Specific measurable goals for each public education program.*
- Sunset dates and program evaluation milestones which must be met for program continuation*
- Reasonable program justification through demonstrated previous success.*

*V. The League supports funding for improved evaluations of public schools, especially through alternative and longitudinal evaluations that demonstrate student readiness for careers or college.*

*Current standardized education tests are overemphasized, take too many teaching days and may not adequately measure student success and college/career readiness.*

*VI. The League urges improved accountability, evaluation and transparency in publicly-funded charter schools. Charter schools receive local funds distributed by the state legislature, which reduces local control and should be clearly identified.*

## **EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

***LWVU Position in Brief***

**The League supports action to promote economic development through quality public and higher education.**

### History

In 1988, the League published “Education: An Increasingly Essential Cornerstone for Economic Prosperity.” Consensus was reached on the following position.

#### *\*LWVU Position on Education and Economic Development (1988)*

Based on “Education: An Increasingly Essential Cornerstone for Economic Prosperity” (1988)

*The League of Women Voters believes that quality public and higher education promote economic development.*

*The League advocates economic development in Utah through a strong higher education system which provides (1) basic research which can attract high technology industries to Utah, (2) programs that facilitate the transfer of technology from higher education to industry, (3) programs that provide a work force well educated for the economy of the future, and (4) retraining capabilities for the current work force.*

*The League advocates economic development in Utah through a strong public education system which (1) attracts and keeps Utah workers who demand a good education for their children and (2) prepares students to be trained for the work force of the future.*

## CORRECTIONS

#### *LWVU Position in Brief (1976)*

**The League supports action to establish jail standards and to encourage community based corrections facilities.**

### History

In 1959, the League issued a publication on juvenile courts and detention facilities which did not result in a consensus or a position. The 1975 convention adopted a study item which resulted in three publications entitled “Crime and ?”. The first two publications, issued in 1976, included Part I - The Adult Offender, Part II - The Juvenile Offender and Part III - Change and Unification. The third publication was a Postscript issued in 1978. These publications led to a statement of position, and in 1979 State Convention called for action to encourage the establishment of jail standards and community corrections facilities. Part of the position statement, which supported the assumption of responsibility for status offenders by the Department of Social Services, was deleted by the 1985 State Convention because this change had been made by the Legislature. The 1984 State Council voted for an updated study of corrections.

In September 2000 the League published “Crime, Punishment and Rehabilitation Revisited: A Study of the Utah Department of Corrections.” Consensus was reached on the following position.

#### *\*LWVU Position on Corrections (2001)*

Based on “Crime, Punishment and Rehabilitation Revisited: A Study of the Utah Department of Corrections” (2001)

*The League of Women Voters of Utah believes that effective reintegration into society should be the primary focus of prison programs. Inmates should have access to Transition Services which assist them in this reintegration process. We also support educational programs for literacy, high-school diploma or GED and vocational training. The League believes that female inmates should have the same access to education, jobs, programming and recreational facilities as male inmates.*

*The LWV supports the enforcement of minimum standards established federally for jails, and believes that all facilities public or private, housing state offenders, should be monitored to ensure compliance to state standards as well as be subject to public oversight. The League believes that the same standards for access to health care, education, recreation, and visitation should be applied to all inmates.*

*Placement of an inmate in a county jail should take the specific needs and privilege level of the individual into account.*

*The LWV recognizes the continued need for correction facilities, but is opposed to the private ownership or management of prisons. We do support the increased use of Community Corrections Centers and Day Reporting centers. These facilities, whether public or private, can provide effective rehabilitative services to certain offenders outside the prison setting.*

*The LWV also supports legislation and funding to promote rehabilitative programs that operate outside the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections if those programs have been proven to be effective. The Drug Court program is an example.*

*The LWV believes the funding for the officers of the Division of Field Operations, within the Department of Corrections, should be sufficient to maintain manageable caseloads for the oversight of probationers and parolees in order to reduce recidivism.*

*The LWV believes that the salaries of Department of Corrections officers should be competitive with those of corrections personnel in county and municipal facilities within Utah.*

*We encourage the Utah Department of Corrections to seek out effective communications and diversity training programs for officers and inmates but do not support this issue as a separate funding priority.*

#### ***\*LWVU Position on Corrections (1976)***

*The League supports the enforcement of minimum standards established federally for jails. In addition, the League recognizes the need for expanded corrections facilities, including specialized community based facilities, and believes that centralized juvenile facilities should be reserved for the most serious offenders with alternative community facilities available for less serious offenders.*

#### ***\*LWVU Position on Juvenile Justice (2002)***

*Based on "A Study of the Utah Juvenile Justice System" (2002)*

*In 2002 the League of Women Voters of Utah published a landmark 75 page Juvenile Justice study, describing the current stakeholders who promote and carry out the policies of the JJ system. All major aspects of the system's complex organization were presented. A flowchart of an offender's progress through the system was created to illustrate how the system functions.*

*Utah's Juvenile Justice system is considered one of the nation's best, but it is challenged by continuing concerns about the relationship between parental abuse and subsequent abuse by youth, an increasing number of female youth offenders, sex offenses, over-representation of minority youth, lack of programs in rural areas, and funding for evaluation of programs and services.*

*Based on the study material, the members of the League reach the following consensus position on Juvenile Justice in Utah.*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah supports the three goals of the 2001 Utah Juvenile Justice System mission statement, "Balanced and Restorative Justice":*

- protection of the public's right to live in a safe and secure setting;*
- the obligation of an offender to restore to the victim and to the community the loss created by the offender's actions; and*

- *development while under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system of an offender's competency to be a responsible and productive citizen.*

*The League supports a Juvenile Justice system with:*

- *uniform access to programs and services statewide for the rehabilitation of all youth offenders, but tailored to urban/rural needs and relying on community resources;*
- *early risk assessment tools and early intervention schemes developed in conjunction with local police, schools, families and communities to help keep offenders out of the system with the caveat that there be frequent evaluation of these experimental programs for reliability, accuracy and validity, especially to ensure that minority youth are not negatively impacted;*
- *professional evaluation and assessment of all ongoing programs, services, staff and facilities, including their relationship to recidivism rates as well as budget and administrative considerations;*
- *retention of the current system organization with the Juvenile Court administering all probation activities and cooperating with the Division of Youth Corrections and with continuing oversight by the Auditor General.*

*We support Legislative action to improve the Juvenile Justice system by:*

- *providing more facilities and treatment options designed for female youth offenders;*
- *ensuring that minority youth receive unbiased and equal treatment in all aspects of the system, including intake;*
- *increasing treatment options for mentally ill offenders;*
- *increasing the number of attorneys and staff with juvenile justice expertise;*
- *increasing programs for youth in transition from secure care to parole in order to reduce recidivism;*
- *implementing the Auditor General's recommendation to recognize and stabilize funding for the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Consortium as the system's research and evaluation agency;*
- *reducing placements of youth out-of-state, where adequate monitoring is impossible.*

***\*LWVU Position on Bias-Motivated Crimes Law (2007)***

Based on "Hate Crime Study" (2006)

*The League supports bias-motivated crimes laws that make it clear that conduct, not speech or thought, is being punished. Further, the League supports bias-motivated crimes laws that assure equal protection under law by listing groups that are "neutral on their face", i.e. race, not African-American; religion, not Baptist.*

***\*LWVU Position on Prison Relocation (2014)***

Based on "Relocation of the Utah State Prison at Draper" (2014)

- *The League feels the economic development potential of the Draper prison property should not drive or be the leading factor of relocation decisions. Economic development should be peripheral to the vital issues facing the corrections system such as reducing the rates of incarceration and recidivism.*
- *The League believes improving the correction system should precede decisions concerning relocation or rebuilding. The League believes the legislature should work with the judicial system, the corrections system and other related agencies to evaluate sentencing. The League believes programs that have been shown to reduce recidivism should be established and funded.*
- *The League supports alternatives to enlarging the prison. Some examples of these alternatives include sentencing reform, drug courts to reduce incarceration rates, programs to prepare inmates to successfully return to society, expanding mental health treatment and parole reform.*
- *The League does not support moving the existing prison to a location which disconnects various support systems that exist for the prison, including correctional staff, professionals and volunteers who work with the prison population, victims and families of prisoners.*

## EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING AND CHILD CARE

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports action to provide equal access to employment and housing** (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88*)

**The League also supports action in support of high quality child care.**

### **History**

**Employment:** Since there has been no state League position, action has been based on the LWVUS position consisting of support for measures to retrain dislocated workers, for training programs for displaced homemakers, and for various self-sufficiency measures to allow welfare recipients to become employed.

**Housing:** In 1971, the League began action based on the LWVUS position to assure equal access to housing. This action has continued in varying degrees to 1984. "Wanted: More Homes" was published in 1977. The League took an active role in creating the Utah Housing Coalition, a broad based low income housing advocacy group, and assisted in preparation of landlord-tenant legislation in 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, and 1983. Although several resulting bills were defeated, in 1981 two of the bills passed which dealt with methods of eviction and return of security deposits. During these years, the League also supported state appropriations for low income housing and currently continues to support landlord-tenant and appropriation measures.

**Child Care:** The League has supported increased state appropriations for child care for low income families under the LWVUS position in order to assure equal access to employment, education and training. The 1983 state convention adopted a child care study to review the child care issues and problems facing Utah families. As a result, The Child Care Challenge was published in 1984 and led to a position statement that same year.

### *\*LWV Position on Employment*

*Employment opportunities in modern, technological societies are closely related to education; therefore, the League supports federal programs to increase the education and training of disadvantaged people. (Impact on Issues 1986-88, Social Policy Insert, Education and Employment Criteria)*

### *\*LWV Position on Housing*

*The League supports efforts to prevent and/or remove discrimination in education, employment and housing and to help communities bring about racial integration of their school systems. (Impact on Issues 1986-88, Social Policy Insert, Fair Housing Criteria).*

### *\*LWVU Position on Housing*

based on the 1990 LWV study, "Wanted: A Home. Still the American Dream?"

*The League of Women Voters of Utah believes that state and local governments should pursue actions which address the problem of homeless persons, increase the supply of decent, affordable, housing for both renters and owners and pursue actions which insure access to that housing. Specific action areas are:*

*Homelessness: Utah should continue support of programs giving shelter to the homeless. However, emphasis should be given to programs that assist homeless persons make the transition to self-sufficiency and permanent housing. Increased use should be made of homes and properties that are available through government agencies at below-market prices. The State should also emphasize programs that prevent people from falling into a state of homelessness, such as mortgage counseling for families in danger of losing their homes.*

*Fit premises: The State Fit Premises Law should be amended to provide better protection to both landlords and tenants.*

*Fair Housing: Opportunities for purchase or renting of homes and for borrowing money for housing should not be restricted because of discriminatory reasons. Speedy resolution of fair housing complaints should be ensured by enacting additional State legislation in keeping with national fair housing legislation and by adequate funding for enforcement of the law.*

*Affordable housing: Housing problems are complicated and interrelated, and providing affordable housing requires multifaceted responses and development of many funding sources. State and local governments should ensure that more housing units are kept viable through housing rehabilitation programs and by using a larger proportion of the federal Small Cities Community Development Block Grant for housing rehabilitation.*

*Government agencies at all levels should take full advantage of federal funds available by establishing flexible housing trust funds with a dedicated funding source. They should also actively encourage other housing programs such as: community outreach by lenders, rental assistance programs, developing nonprofit housing corporations, utilizing Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) grants and loans and securing additional certificates and vouchers for public housing.*

#### *\*LWVU Position on Child Care (1984)*

*The League of Women Voters of Utah recognizes the need for and supports the availability of child care for families of all income levels. It is a reality of today's sociological and economic patterns that mothers and fathers in single and two parent families are employed. Good supplemental child care is stabilizing to society, of immediate value to families, and forestalls greater institutional costs later.*

*The League believes that the family should and does assume the major responsibility for providing child care. The League also believes that the responsibility for providing supplemental child care rests with private providers, employers, both private and governmental, schools, churches and local, state and federal governments in varying degrees.*

*The League urges parents to become informed about and involved in child care, to identify and choose high quality care, and to monitor it. The League urges employers to assume an increased role in providing child care and to investigate the benefits both to themselves and to their employees. School buildings should be used for before- and after-school child care, but programs should be staffed and funded independently.*

*The members of the League believe that state government, in consultation with parents and educators, should be the regulatory agency for child care and should continue to license child care centers and homes. The members support sufficient funding for enforcement of existing state regulations. The League supports efforts to raise qualification requirements for child care providers. Training is essential.*

*The League supports an effort to make quality child care a state and national priority.*

## **INCOME MAINTENANCE**

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and access to health care. (Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1986-88, Social Policy insert, Meeting Basic Human Needs).**

### **History**

In 1957 and 1958, the League issued two publications, consisting of surveys of public welfare in Utah. No position was adopted based on these surveys, and no further study has been done. However, under the national position, the League has actively supported adequate grants to meet the basic needs of welfare recipients. In

1983, the League, in cooperation with other agencies and organizations, heavily supported an initiative for an innovative "Self-Sufficiency" program to be undertaken by the Department of Social Services. As a result, the 1983 legislature funded self-sufficiency counselors in field offices to assist voluntary recipients to make plans for education, training and/or employment. The League continues to support this program and other allied support systems, such as child care, a state supplement to the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program, increased appropriations for emergencies in such areas as transportation and clothing, support/information groups and increased stipends to participants in the Work Experience and Training (WEAT) program. Action has been based on the national position and the national criteria for the position. (See *Impact on Issues, LWVUS*, 1984-86 and 1986-88, Social Policy insert)

## HEALTH

### *LWVUS Position in Brief*

**The League believes that quality, affordable health care should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care. Furthermore, the League believes that all Americans should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care. (Impact on Issues 2004-2006.)**

### History

In 1973, the state convention established a health interest research committee to investigate health services in Utah. A study, "Health Care Services in Utah," was published in 1974. No consensus was reached, but the League has actively supported adequate Medicaid funding to include optical and dental care based on the national general Social Policy position of promoting social justice, securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and poverty.

## WOMEN'S ISSUES

### *LWV Position in Brief*

**The League supports action to support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. (*Impact on Issues, LWVUS*, 1984-86).**

**The Utah League supports action to secure legislation in Utah to make marital property laws more equitable to women.**

### History

In 1975, the League became actively involved in the effort to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment in Utah. Most action was carried out in cooperation with the Equal Rights Coalition of Utah until 1981, when the League determined to pursue independent action including financial support for the LWVUS-ERA fund. Two publications were issued during this period: "Women: Past, Present, and Future" in 1976, and "The Voice of Womankind - An Historical Perspective of Equality in Utah" in 1978.

Another study, "Marital Property Rights," was adopted in 1981 and published in 1982. It included a League position statement and a request that the legislature begin a study of marital property issues, using the League study and a draft of the Uniform Marital Property Act as resource material.

*\*LWV Position on Women's Issues*

Equal Rights Amendment and other Women's Issues: See Impact on Issues, LWVUS, 1984-86.

*\*LWV Marital Property Rights ( 1982)*

*The League of Women Voters supports a statutory definition of marital property which establishes automatic co-ownership of property acquired by the efforts of either spouse during the marriage.*

*Under such a definition each spouse should have the right to dispose of his/her share of marital property by will. In case of death, the marital property share of the surviving spouse becomes the survivor's separate property without going through probate.*

*In disputes dealing with management and control of marital property, the courts might provide counseling and arbitration services as an alternative to forcing spouses to seek legal redress. In divorce settlements, the League supports the presumption of equal division of marital property with the provision that judges retain the discretion to modify that distribution if extenuating circumstances exist.*

*\*LWVU Job Training Partnership Act Program Concurrence Statement*

The League of Women Voters of Utah (LWVU) believes that Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs will best serve the training and employment needs of economically disadvantaged and other women in Utah only when there is equitable representation of women on JTPA advisory, policy and planning councils. Because women are significantly under-represented on these bodies, LWVU supports increasing to equitable levels the representation of women on the state Job Training Coordinating Council (JTCC) and on Private Industry Councils (PICs) in the nine Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) throughout the state.

The LWVU is concerned about the low placement wage levels of females after JTPA training. The League is also concerned about the disparity between placement wage levels of males and females upon completion of JTPA training. The LWVU urges the state (a) to take measures to encourage women to enter training for higher paying nontraditional jobs, to encourage employers to hire women into higher paying nontraditional jobs, and to provide programs to prepare women to meet the eighth grade reading requirement for entry into training for nontraditional jobs, and (b) to make every reasonable effort to eliminate the inequity in placement wage levels. The LWVU recommends that the state JTPA program, insofar as possible, provide the type, intensity, quality and duration of training that will lead women into jobs that pay wages that will allow them to support themselves and their families.

The League further believes that in order to take advantage of JTPA programs, economically disadvantaged women must have the following support services readily available: adequate child care, health care, transportation, relocation assistance, appropriate clothing and equipment, peer group support, post-program support and other supportive services. Therefore, LWVU urges the state to monitor carefully these support services and to take any steps necessary to assure that the services continue to be readily available to JTPA participants. If shortfalls in federal or state budgets result in cuts to budgets which supplement JTPA support services, the Office of Job Training for Economic Development (OJTED) and the Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) should be prepared to use JTPA support funds immediately to meet the needs no longer met by other sources. The state should facilitate requests from SDAs to exceed the 15% cap on support services when necessary to assure adequate provision of support services.