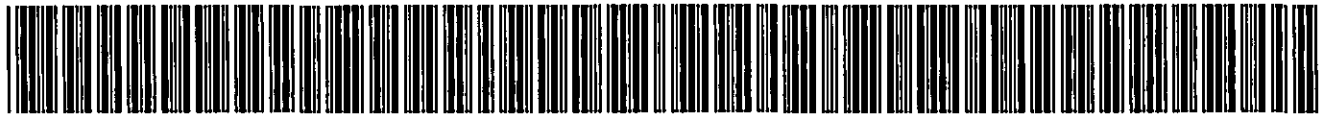


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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

— a —

mighty

political

experiment

MEANTIME, THERE WILL STAND THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, THE BIG, COMPOSITE, NONPARTISAN BODY, WITH ITS CLARIFICATION PLACE FOR PARTISAN COMPLEXITIES, ITS COMMON MEETING GROUND FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF PRINCIPLES, IDEALS AND ISSUES...IT IS A VAST EXPERIMENT.

—THE WOMAN CITIZEN, FEBRUARY 28, 1920

Nearly

75 years after  
the League of Women Voters  
was founded,  
it is still a mighty political experiment.



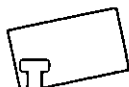
Every day,  
in communities across the nation,  
the experiment is recreated  
and the power of the original idea  
is demonstrated anew.



Every day,  
this grassroots network of Americans  
takes on new challenges  
in democracy.



TAKE **BACK**  
THE SYSTEM



**The League is strictly nonpartisan; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office. At the same time, the League is wholeheartedly political—working to influence public policy through education and advocacy.**

**F**ounded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. It is a unique activist network that derives its strength from the energy and commitment of more than a hundred thousand members and supporters nationwide. The League knows first-hand the value of citizens organized for change.

The League ambitiously pursues its dual mission:

- ☐ To encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.
- ☐ To secure public policies that promote League goals reached through member participation and agreement.

The League is strictly nonpartisan; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office at any level of government. At the same time, the League is wholeheartedly political—working to influence public policy through education and advocacy. It is the original grassroots citizen network, directed by the consensus of its members across the country.

## **GRASSROOTS STRENGTH**

**T**he League of Women Voters works at the local, state and national levels, paralleling the levels of American government. Most people know us through the local League of Women Voters in their community. The League is organized in more than a thousand communities, in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

## **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS EDUCATION FUND**

The membership and political advocacy of the League of Women Voters of the United States is complemented by the citizen education and research activities of the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF).

Founded in 1957, the LWVEF provides local and state Leagues, as well as the wider public, with information and educational services on elections and on current public policy issues. The League of Women Voters Education Fund is renowned for its ability to make complex and controversial issues accessible to the nonexpert citizen in a balanced, evenhanded way. And the LWVEF is an experienced trainer of community leaders and activists.

Of course, a special and familiar focus of the League's educational work is voting and elections. Leagues in communities across the nation are known for providing voters with factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and ballot issues, whether through voter's guides, candidate forums, town meetings or debates. Much of the League's campaign to Take Back the System for American voters is spearheaded by the League of Women Voters Education Fund.



The League is organized in more than a thousand communities, in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

The organization's name, like its mission, derives from the proud legacy of the women's suffrage movement. Today's mem-



**When citizens  
are prevented from  
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government,  
American democracy  
is endangered. The  
League of Women  
Voters believes that  
the time has come for  
voters to Take Back  
the System.**

bers are women and men; any citizen aged 18 or older can join. Members may join through any level of the League, and with membership comes the opportunity to work on local, state, regional and national public policy issues. Local Leagues set their local programs, priorities and dues; state Leagues set the statewide agenda.

National League activities are coordinated and staffed by two distinct but complementary organizations. The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is the political advocacy and membership organization. The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), established in 1957, is the citizen education and research organization.

The League's hallmark is its unique grassroots approach to study and action. Every national League position is based on nationwide study and consensus among members. During the consensus process, members draw on balanced, pro/con materials, develop their own resources, turn to technical experts and public officials for information, and reach out to the community through public meetings, surveys and media coverage. The same thorough process is used for studying national health care policy in the United States, for examining local recycling policies or for evaluating statewide school finance formulas.

Once a position is reached, the League marshals all of its tools to influence the shape of public policy. Work is focused on priority issues every year, in order to channel the League's citizen power for the greatest effect. Grassroots lobbying efforts are the key to the League's legislative success. Strategies include testimony, letters and phone calls to key legislators, working in coalition with other groups, community outreach and media campaigns.

On Capitol Hill, the League's grassroots message is constantly reinforced through person-to-person contact by a lobby corps of Washington-area volunteers, national board members and staff.

### **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MISSION**

**T**he League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### **VISION, BELIEFS AND INTENTIONS**

**T**he goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters of the United States is a nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels.
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

*(Continued on next page)*



**To empower  
citizens to shape  
better communities  
worldwide.**

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization, which:

- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner.
- enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

**We believe in:**

- respect for individuals.
- the value of diversity.
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.
- the power of collective decision making for the common good.

**We will:**

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism.
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership and programs.
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.



## **LWV LEADS CITIZEN CAMPAIGN TO TAKE BACK THE SYSTEM**

In the 1990s, the League is rededicating its efforts nationwide to promote voting and citizen participation in government.

The League of Women Voters in 1991 launched a nationwide citizen campaign to Take Back the System—a plan of action to make voter registration more accessible, provide voters with information on candidates and issues and restore the voters' confidence and involvement in our American electoral system.

The League believes that democracy depends on the informed and active participation of its citizens. When citizens are prevented from participating meaningfully in their government, American democracy is endangered. The League of Women Voters believes that the time has come for voters to Take Back the System.

### **THE LEAGUE'S NATIONAL AGENDA**

The League of Women Voters of the United States works to influence public policy in four broad issue areas, encompassing a range of interrelated principles and goals.

**GOVERNMENT:** The League's goal is to 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; that assures opportunities for citizen participation in government decision making; that provides sound agriculture policies; and that preserves public health and safety through gun control measures.

League members have studied and reached positions on: Agriculture Policy, Citizen



**To promote an open  
governmental system  
that is representative,  
accountable and  
responsive.**



**To promote peace in  
an interdependent  
world.**

Rights, Congress and the Presidency, DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation, The Election Process, Fiscal Policy, Gun Control, Voting Rights and Public Policy on Reproductive Choice.

In 1993, the League achieved a primary legislative goal: congressional passage of national voter registration reform legislation to remove unnecessary obstacles on the path to the voting booth. Attention then turned to successful implementation of the new law in the states and to national campaign finance reform legislation to make candidates more responsive to the voters than to the special interests.

Publications include *Understanding Economic Policy: A Citizen's Handbook* and *Public Policy on Reproductive Choice: A Community Action Guide*.

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:** The League's goal is to promote peace in an interdependent world by cooperating with other nations, strengthening international organizations, fostering long-term development, negotiating arms control measures and encouraging the successful resolution of conflicts through nonmilitary means.

League members have studied and taken positions on: Arms Control, Military Policy and Defense Spending, Trade, The United Nations, and U.S. Relations with Developing Countries.

In recent years, the League has lobbied for U.S. support of the United Nations, including full payment of our country's financial assessment. The League responded to the dramatic events in Eastern Europe at the turn of the decade with an initiative to invite citizen activists from eastern European nations to experience first-hand the grassroots traditions and influence of the League at the

community level. "Building Political Participation in Poland" in 1992 was the first of the League's emerging democracy programs.

**NATURAL RESOURCES:** The League's goal is to 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.

League members have studied and taken positions on: Resource Management, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, and Public Participation in Environmental Decision Making.

In recent years, the League was a leader in the long citizen effort to win passage of a strong Clean Air Act in Congress. Subsequent League efforts are focused on the need to reauthorize other key environmental legislation, such as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. The LWVEF has a well deserved reputation for providing citizen education opportunities and resources in the environmental area. Recent examples include *The Plastic Waste Primer*, *The Garbage Primer* and the third edition of *The Nuclear Waste Primer*, all handbooks for citizen action.

**SOCIAL POLICY:** The League's goal is to promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty.

League members have studied and taken positions on Child Care; Equality of Opportunity, Health Care, Meeting Basic Human Needs, and Urban Policy.

Based on a nationwide study of the delivery and financing of health care, League mem-



**To promote an  
environment  
beneficial to life.**



**To promote social and economic justice, secure equal rights for all, and combat discrimination and poverty.**

bers' current legislative goal is reform of the U.S. health care system to provide access to a basic level of quality care for all residents and to control health care costs. The League favors a national health insurance plan and supports increased taxes to finance a basic level of care for all U.S. residents, provided health care reforms contain effective cost control strategies. As the United States moves toward a national health insurance plan, an employer-based system of reform that provides universal access is acceptable to the League.

In 1993, the League worked to help pass the Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to employees for the birth or adoption of a child or for the care of a seriously ill family member. LWVEF publications include *Expanding School-Age Child Care: A Community Action Guide*, which describes Leagues' pilot projects to stimulate the supply of school-age child care in their communities.

### **WHOSE SYSTEM IS IT ANYWAY?**

Our focus on the issues and on encouraging true government of the people has earned the League its reputation as a respected and effective participant in the American political process. And in an era of proliferating and powerful special interests, the League's advocacy of the public interest is increasingly recognized as an essential voice of democracy.

Join the League and help us Take Back the System.

**JOIN US!**

**IF YOUR GOALS MATCH OUR GOALS,  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL HELP ACHIEVE THEM.**

☐ **YES!** I want to help Take Back the System. Please sign me up!

☐ I'm enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for individual membership.

☐ I'm enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for household membership.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF SECOND HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

☐ In addition to my membership, I'd like to make a contribution of  
\$\_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Please send me more information on the League of Women  
Voters.

☐ I can't join right now, but I'm enclosing \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support  
League activities.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY

\_\_\_\_\_  
STATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP CODE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (HOME)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (OFFICE)

**MAKE CHECK PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:**

Because we lobby at the local, state and national levels, membership dues and other contributions to the League of Women Voters are not tax-deductible.

Combined annual expenditures of the national offices of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters Education Fund are approximately \$5.5 million.

Both are nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations that receive contributions from a variety of sources, including foundations, corporations, unions and individuals. The LWVUS also receives significant support from its members.

The LWVUS is a 501(c)(4) organization under the Internal Revenue tax code; the LWVEF is a 501(c)(3) organization that can accept tax-deductible contributions.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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