

State Program 2023-2025

Affirmed by 39th State Convention Delegates on June 3, 2023.

Program Preface

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

Government in Florida

Promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the state.

Florida Constitution

Support basic law that assures a government responsive and accountable to the people of the state. Support retention of the 1968 Florida Constitutional Amendment for home rule by municipalities and counties in the administration of local issues.

- Ensure that Fair District Standards are adhered to for the Redistricting of Congressional and Florida Legislative Districts.

Finance and Taxation

Support a state fiscal structure that is equitable in its distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs.

Election Law

Support measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise and to advocate for fair methods of financing political campaigns including public financing.

Issues for Action:

- Support automatic restoration of voting rights for former felony offenders after completion of sentence excluding any additional fines or liens not ordered by the sentencing judge. Amendment 4 excludes persons convicted of murder or felony sex offenders.
- Support encouraging the Florida Division of Elections to establish a database or clearing house for Returning Citizens to confirm voter registration eligibility.
- Support notifying voters if their Vote-By-Mail ballot has been accepted or rejected and provide a remedy for ensuring the vote of those whose ballots have been rejected.
- Support Florida's participation in the Electronic Registration Information Center including notification of all citizens who may be eligible but are not registered.
- Support implementation of Election Day Registration as soon as administratively possible.
- Support implementation of automatic voter registration of eligible voters.
- Establish threshold criteria for write-in candidates that mirror current requirements for announced candidates. The presence of write-in candidates as the only opponent should not close the primary.
- Make election voting portable within the county to enable the broadest voter access.
- Support statewide use of an Open Primary election system that would allow for the broadest possible vote participation.
- Support the election of the President and Vice president by direct popular vote. Support the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.
- Replace Florida's present closed Presidential Preference Primary with an Open Primary system of voting.
- Support the abolishment of Super PACs, the elimination of foreign money investment in US elections, reducing dollar contributions to campaigns and limiting carryover funds from campaigns to PACs.

- Support state funding of return postage for Vote-By-Mail ballots in all counties when Congressional and Florida legislative offices are on the ballot.
- Support redistricting preferably being vested by an independent special commission, with membership that reflects the diversity of the unit of government, including citizens at large, representatives of public interest groups, and members of minority groups.

Education in Florida

Support a free public secular school system for Florida with high standards for student achievement and with equality of educational opportunity for all that is financed adequately by the state through an equitable funding formula. Establish a statewide Civics Education Subcommittee under the state Education committee.

Issues for Action:

- Promote adequate and equitable funding of public education by:
 - Use a multiyear approach to bring Florida's total per-pupil funding to at least the median of the national ranking of the states by U.S. Department of Education, providing school districts adequate funding and the flexibility to implement programs and adopt spending plans that best meet their communities' needs.
 - Resolve the inequities in capital improvement funding.
 - Oppose the use of public funding for the expansion of funding of private education, including through voucher programs.
 - Support requirements that state and local capital outlay funds and the assets they purchase must be able to be recouped by the school district before capital outlay funding can be released to a charter school.
- Support a curricular framework that includes broad common standards developed by educational experts that serves as a guide to local districts.
- Support the increased oversight of the development and implementation of charter school contracts with regard to administrative fees, facility contracts, teacher salaries and benefits, and instructional innovation, independence of charter board members, and unmet need in the district.
- Support a statewide assessment and accountability system that provides valid data at appropriate intervals to measure student progress for all students and schools that receive public funds directly or indirectly. Data should be used to identify areas where increased support is needed.

- Support higher standards for early childhood education staff and programs.
- Increase funding for high quality preschool program of certified teachers
- Promote diversity and nondiscrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, citizenship, socio-economic status and ability status in all publicly funded schools, including publicly funded colleges and universities.

Justice in Florida

Support a judicial system that provides a unified court structure, improved provisions for judicial selection and merit retention and equal access to legal services. Support a criminal justice system that emphasizes diversion and deflection, rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration.

Issue for Action:

- Support juvenile justice actions that emphasize civil citations and increased judicial oversight of direct file of juveniles to adult court.
- Support rehabilitation and other alternatives to incarceration.

Social Policy in Florida

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

Issue for Action:

- Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by the Florida Legislature and passage of a resolution by the U.S. Congress to remove any outstanding deadlines to ratify the ERA.

Children and Families

Support measures to meet special concerns of children and families, including countering intrafamily abuse and providing for safe homes, foster care and shelter care.

Issue for Action:

- Support the safe rescue and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and the education of the public about this issue.
- Support employment at a livable wage for all workers.

- Support equal pay for women.
- Support better coordination between school and community services in social services, pre-school programs, and after school programs.
- Support measures to maximize eligibility for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and to exclude work requirements for Medicaid recipients.
- Support subsidized quality childcare for low income families.

Financing & Delivery of Health Care

Support measures to implement Florida health care in a manner consistent with the LWVUS position on health care reform.

Issues for Action:

- Support implementation of the March 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in Florida, emphasizing access to high quality healthcare for all and control of costs for the individual including Medicaid expansion and mental health coverage.
- Support the Constitutional right of people to make reproductive choices, have privacy and have availability of services.

Housing

Protect the Sadowski Fund so it can only be used for affordable housing.

Farmworkers

Support measures to provide safe, adequate living and working conditions for farm workers.

Libraries

Support full funding of eligible public library systems as provided in Section 257.27 in the Florida Statutes.

Immigration

Support immigration policies that promote reunification of immediate families, meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States, and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the United States on student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

Issue for Action:

- Support granting driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.
- Support the June 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the abolishment of quotas, and support sanctuary cities.

Gun Violence Prevention

Support regulations concerning the purchase, ownership, safe storage for unattended guns and use of handguns and long guns that balance as nearly as possible individual constitutional rights with the general interest and welfare of the community.

Issues for Action:

- Support changes in law to allow local communities to enact ordinances for any type of gun safety measures in their jurisdiction.
- Support expansion of mandated background checks and three-day waiting periods for ALL gun sales or transfers, including gun shows and unlicensed gun sales, and ensure the state provides all relevant records to the FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- Support a state ban on all semi- automatic assault style weapons and large capacity feeding devices.
- Support changes in the law to make lying on a background check punishable by law.

Sustainability in Florida

Support governmental action that results in sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Environment, society and the economy must be integrated and balanced to achieve a sustainable Florida.

Issues for Action:

- Support public transportation projects which yield multi-modal investments in local and state enhanced infrastructure, especially in low-income areas.
- Support governmental actions that result in sustainability by meeting the needs of the present without endangering the future.
- Support the adoption of a renewable portfolio standard.
- Support the development of state, regional and local climate change plans.
- Request the Governor join the US Climate Alliance by 2023
- Request Florida mayors to join the Climate Mayors by 2023.

Natural Resources in Florida

Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the inter relationship of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

Issue for Action:

- Protect our natural springs from nutrient runoff and unsuitable uses. (i.e., commercially bottled water).
- Support the protection and restoration of estuaries

Land Use

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

Issues for Action:

- Support the preparation and implementation of a new state growth management plan that addresses current needs.
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- Take steps to ensure that land uses are exemplary of environmental justice.

Energy

Support state legislation for energy conservation and greater use of renewable sources such as solar energy.

Issues for Action:

- Continue partnership with FL SUN to create solar cooperatives.
- Support state legislation and local policy makers to expand solar and the electrification of transportation.
- Support the adoption of relevant energy alternatives.
- Support public transportation that does not rely on fossil fuels.

- Advocate statewide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining a robust economy that is in line with the United Nations (UN) and Paris Accords (i.e., reduction of 45% by 2030 and 100% by 2050).
- Back placing a price on carbon emissions whether cap-and-trade or carbon tax/fee, while ensuring equity in its implementation.

Freshwater Resources

Support public policies that promote conservation of freshwater and its availability for environmental, public supply, agricultural, industrial and mining uses on a priority basis.

Issues for Action:

- Update the study of groundwater resources to ensure they are adequate to meet future needs.
- Support septic to sewer conversion and state tracking of septic inspections.
- Request maximum support for Everglades Agricultural Area funding.
- Support enforcement of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) regarding releases to surface water.

Coastal Management

Support intergovernmental stewardship of and fiscal responsibility for the Florida coast, under the management of the state, while recognizing the dominance of nature and the role of the sand transport system.

Issues for Action:

- Advocate for an equitable transition plan to move people from high-risk areas where climate change mitigation is not feasible.
- State support of coastal communities in developing localized responses to Sea Level Rise and salt-water intrusion into drinking water wells.

Environmental Protection and Pollution Control

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

Issues for Action:

- Support the ban of advanced well stimulation treatments (“fracking”) including but not limited to hydraulic fracturing, acid fracturing, and matrix acidizing.

- Take positions to preserve our wetland ecosystems.
- Discourage use of single-use, non-essential, disposable plastics from fossil fuels

Public Participation

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

Agriculture

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