

LWV OF ALASKA POSITION STATEMENTS

Available online at the League of Women Voters of Alaska website <http://www.alaskalwv.org>.

Government

1. CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska favors public disclosure of campaign contributions of money, goods, or services, as well as the disclosure of financial interests of public officials, both elected and appointed. All disclosure reports should be received, compiled and published by an independent commission, which should have final responsibility for monitoring and enforcement. The League also favors limitations on the length of political campaigns, the time allowed for fund raising, the amount of contributions and, notwithstanding the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the amount of expenditures.

The goals of a campaign system should be:

1. To ensure the public's right to know.
2. To combat corruption and undue influence.
3. To enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.
4. To promote citizen participation in the political process.

"To enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office" reflects two distinct concerns: First, that differences in candidates' personal wealth and other financial resources not be a necessary consideration in seeking public office; and, second, that insofar as possible there be an equalization of opportunity for challengers and incumbents.

Adopted 1968; Revised 1991; 2024; Reaffirmed each year at LWVAK Convention.

2. CAPITAL BUDGET PROCESS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that prudent capital spending by the State of Alaska requires realistic budget preparation, clear project definition, use of standardized criteria for determination of need, and public involvement. In order to promote the judicious management of the capital budget process and capital projects, the League supports the following:

- * Establishment and implementation of consistently applied statutory criteria for defining and prioritizing all proposed capital projects;
- * Recognition and documentation of the effect of capital expenditures on the operating budgets and bonding capabilities of state and local governments;
- * Public understanding of and involvement in the capital budget preparation process;
- * Financial participation by local governments in the funding of requested capital projects;

* Utilization of a single procedure for the proposal and evaluation of potential capital improvement projects; and

* Accountability for the expenditures of capital funds in accordance with public and legislative intent.

Any spending limit should be in statutory, not constitutional, form and be based on the future availability of funding for the operation and maintenance of state-financed capital improvement projects.

Adopted 1985; Reaffirmed each year at LWVAK Convention.

3. CONSTITUTION, AMENDING BY INITIATIVE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska opposes amending the Alaska Constitution by initiative.

Adopted 1998; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that a constitutional convention should not be held at this time.

Adopted 1982; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

5. LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that the Alaska legislative system should be responsive, representative, accessible, efficient, and accountable. We feel that the legislative structure, which would best accomplish this goal, contains the following elements.

* Measures to facilitate the budgetary process;

* Clearly delineated procedures for legislative committee action and treatment of legislation during all states of the process.

* Conference committee and free conference committee deliberations that are open, judicious, germane and subject to public notice.

* Caucus should be open with exception of circumstances involving prejudicial and personnel matters.

* Procedures followed which maximize consolidation of effort between the two houses of the Legislature.

* Easy availability to information for the public concerning legislative activities and ease of access for public participation in the legislative process.

* Procedures that enhance operational effectiveness including clear enforcement of rules.

Adopted ??; Revised 1993; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

6. ALASKA'S STATUTORY INITIATIVE PROCESS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports the existing initiative process and makes the following recommendations:

- Initiatives should be voted on only at General Elections, not special or primary elections.
- Support change that requires simplicity and clarity of the wording of initiative questions with a “yes” vote to indicate in favor of the measure and a “no” vote to indicate opposition to the measure.
- Support disclosure on each initiative petition of the name(s) or group(s) that is paying the gatherer and how they are paid, such as by signature or by the hour.
- Support the requirement for not less than 500 qualified voters as sponsors to the prospective petition with the Lieutenant Governor's office.
- Support the requirement for a number of valid signatures not less than ten (10%) percent of the total number of the votes cast in the preceding general elections.
- Support a formula for at least 50 signatures in each of two-thirds of the legislative districts in order to reflect statewide interest in a measure.
- Support the requirement an attorney general advisory opinion as to the constitutionality of each proposed initiative after it has qualified for the ballot, such opinion to be published in the State Election Pamphlet.
- Support the existing limit on time for collecting signatures to one year.
- Support the requirement for a cost analysis to be on each initiative petition.
- Support the requirement that signature gatherers be qualified voters of Alaska.

Adopted 2001 at Post-Convention Board Meeting; Reaffirmed each year since at LWWAK Convention

7. VOTER REGISTRATION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes that an equitable voter registration system should encourage maximum interest and participation in the electoral process, be simple and efficient to administer, and should aid in preventing fraudulent voting practices. To achieve these objectives, the League supports:

- Voter identification which does not inhibit voter access to the electoral process;
- Mandatory training of election officials;
- Comprehensive registration information available online; and
- Outreach to all eligible residents including newly naturalized citizens and students.

The League believes that a statewide registration system should reflect the above objectives and should:

- Provide for permanent and portable registration with the ability to change registration information online;
- Make registration easily accessible (e.g., through the Division of Motor Vehicles);
- Allow registration in person and by mail as well as through electronic means;
- Provide a system of preregistration for 16-17 year-olds;
- Permit same day registration for voting on election day; and
- Provide for routine purging of registration rolls.

Adopted 1968; updated 2014; reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

Natural Resources

8. ENERGY

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) favors the wise use and development of a variety of energy sources to ensure a sustainable long-term cultural, environmental, and economic future for Alaska, and for all Alaskans.

LWVAK supports energy development and use that protects the health and safety of people and the environment, and which includes an open and inclusive permitting process. The precautionary principle should be applied when developing public policies and regulations, and when evaluating energy sources and projects for Alaska's unique communities and regions.

Energy conservation and efficiency should be maximized through use of public education, energy research and the development of new energy technologies. We support improving energy efficiency in existing homes, and commercial and public buildings through weatherization and other public and private incentive programs. We support ongoing revision of State and local uniform building codes to increase energy efficiency standards for new construction.

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports development and installation of renewable-source energy systems, such as solar, wind, tidal, hydro, and geothermal. We encourage long-term public and private planning and investment that reduces the life cycle cost of energy systems. We give priority to community and State decisions that lead to the use of energy systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We support increasing transportation fuel efficiency standards, and the development or expansion of energy efficient public transportation options. We recognize the value of some smaller, community or regional energy projects that may take less time and funding to develop and may also be less vulnerable to disasters.

LWVAK supports delaying use or expansion of technologies for which there remain serious disparities between the promised performance and the actual safety and environmental impact record. We urge caution when there is potential for pervasive, profound, or long-lived consequences or irreparable harm to water, air, or food (fish and agriculture).

- We oppose development and use of nuclear energy until secure options exist for plant management, and toxic waste transport, processing and disposal.
- Where other alternatives are reasonably available, we do not support the use of coal. Where coal is used, ongoing monitoring of emissions and upgrading of technology should be carried out to reduce impacts on humans and the environment.
- LWVAK will need evidence that surface and ground water quality will be unaffected, before supporting hydraulic fracturing for gas and oil recovery.
- LWVAK supports the development of clean technologies to use biomass as an energy source, provided that the use of each biomass source has been proven by long-term studies to not degrade air quality or the environment.

Adopted 1978; revised 1991; 2013; reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention, under study for revision 2024-24

9. LAND DISPOSAL

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska feels the purpose of the State land disposal program should be to dispose of land within specific parameters. Disposal programs should allow for a variety of land uses maintaining program continuity from year to year including adequate administration and enforcement costs in land prices. Continued emphasis should be placed upon requiring land inventories, comprehensive land use plans, and public involvement. League members believe that a fair exchange value is an important aspect of State land pricing policy with investment returns from State lands going primarily to State or municipal governments.

Adopted 1980; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

10. LAND USE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports good land use planning; the formulation, implementation, and enforcement of comprehensive plans (including regional plans) for the use of all lands in the State of Alaska; the ensuring of coordination and cooperation among state, federal, municipal, and private landowners; and placement of responsibility for making and enforcing land use decisions on the lowest level of government immediately concerned with the land in question.

Adopted 1975; Revised 1979, 1985; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

Social Policy

11. CAREER EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The Alaska State League of Women Voters believes that the combination of home and school prepares students for competence in the world of work. The League recognizes the importance of parental advocacy and/or adult mentorship in the career preparation process. Most people receive no schooling or training, other than on the job, beyond high school. Therefore, we believe that our schools have the responsibility to graduate students who exhibit job readiness, positive work attitudes, and cooperation skills that will enable them to find and hold employment.

The League believes that the Alaskan schools should offer equal opportunities and respect to ALL students: those who will have post-secondary schooling and those who will immediately go into the work force. To meet this goal, the basic curricula should include problem-solving skills, interpersonal communications and tolerance skills, as well as provide opportunities to explore careers and offer courses containing specific technical training and career experience. Academic skills needed for success in today's entry-level careers should be integrated into career preparation experience.

Adopted 1994; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

12. CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports the availability of childcare for everyone who needs or wants it with priority given to those children whose need is greatest. The League believes users should be primarily responsible for childcare financing. Supplemental financial and regulatory responsibilities should be shared by all levels of government to ensure that child care is of high quality, affordable and available to those who need it.

Adopted 1976; Revised 1986; Amended 2001; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

13. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND BULLYING

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska believes all individuals have the right to live in a fear-free environment, and to be safe from sexual assault (SA); psychological, emotional and physical abuse; and neglect. A special degree of protection is needed for vulnerable, dependent people of any age.

Intervention by public agencies should take place when there is evidence of sexual assault or of physical, psychological or emotional abuse (including stalking) of one family member by another or one partner by another (including dating partnerships). However, this is not to suggest that mandated reporting be instituted as this may actually increase danger for victims/survivors. When necessary to separate family members, it is preferable to remove the perpetrator rather than the victim from the home, particularly if the victim is a child. Physical or sexual assault should be prosecuted whether or not the victim presses charges.

Federal, state and local governments should share responsibility for the health and safety of family members, with primary responsibility at state and local levels. Adequate funding is necessary for the care and protection of the spouse (including ex-spouse, partner, etc.) and children victimized by violence; and costs must be shared by all levels of government, private charitable contributions, and a special fund into which perpetrators are required to pay. To the maximum extent possible, perpetrators should be held financially responsible for these costs, and no victim should ever be required to pay any costs associated with a domestic violence (DV) or sexual assault incident. Domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault require a coordinated response by law enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, social service/victim agencies, and the medical community. All people who work with domestic violence and sexual assault incidents must receive special training specific to working with victims, including trauma and its effects. Training can be provided by experts in the field such as those at local DV/SA agencies. This training should be customized to the area of practice of the service providers and include basic training for new hires and periodic follow-up training for all those who work with victims.

Adopted 1986; Revised 1995; 2010. Reaffirmed each year since at LWWAK Convention.

14. YOUTH & ADOLESCENT NEEDS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports comprehensive policies and services for youth in order to maximize their participation in citizenry and democracy. Services should be coordinated among all public and private agencies concerned with homelessness, education, vocational advancement, inter-personal relationships, mental and physical health, family stability, and peer empowerment.

Identified prevention-oriented goals are:

- Support of family cohesiveness
- Support for victims of abuse, neglect and sexual assault

- Support of high school graduation and vocational education for youth
- Education of youth to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections
- Education of youth concerning drug and alcohol abuse
- Support of runaway and “throw away” youth and their needs
- Education of youth concerning suicide
- Education of youth concerning criminal acts and consequences of those acts

Adopted 1971; Revised 1988; 2011, Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

15. LANDLORD-TENANT RELATIONSHIPS

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska supports programs and policies to provide equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origins. In addition, League members agree that work to promote fair housing and an adequate supply of housing for low-income families must proceed hand in hand. One of our goals in the work of promoting fair housing is Tenant's Rights. A uniform landlord-tenant act which specifies tenants' rights, and both landlord and tenant obligations in maintaining a fit and habitable dwelling is important in achieving this goal.

Adopted 1974; Revised 1994; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

16. SCHOOL FINANCE

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) recognizes, based on the Alaska State Constitution, that the State has the major responsibility for financing schools in Alaska, including grades PreK--12. However, local school districts in organized and unorganized boroughs should be required to contribute a percentage of the financial support and should have the major responsibility for decision making in the expenditure of funds. Public monies for education should NOT support student vouchers or Educational Savings Accounts (ESA's) that are allocated to private or for-profit schools; nor should public education funding be allocated to for-profit Educational Management Organizations (EMO's).

Adopted 1977; Revised 1985; 1986; 2016; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention.

17. ELECTION PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) believes voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. LWVAK works to protect that right and to increase voter participation by all citizens. The LWVAK believes the state has an obligation to provide voters with accurate information so that voters can make reasoned choices. The LWVAK supports elections that are

free, fair and accessible to all eligible voters and voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent.

Adopted 2016; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention. Revised 2019, 2024.

18. JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT AND RETENTION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports a judicial appointment and retention process that is merit-based, transparent, representative of and responsive to the public and to the Constitutions of the State of Alaska and United States.

Adopted 1/11/2016; Reaffirmed each year since at LWVAK Convention

19. GUN SAFETY

STATEMENT OF POSITION

The League of Women Voters of Alaska finds that the safety and health of its citizens are threatened by a lack of safe gun ownership laws. The League recognizes that many Alaskans value and rely on firearms for hunting and personal protection and respects the right of Alaskans to own and use guns. However, firearms cause very high rates of death and injury in our state, particularly among children and teens. Therefore, the League believes the state government should adopt common-sense gun laws that will save lives and reduce injuries, and supports the following with an emphasis on public safety: Safe storage, including gun locks, Annual licensing fees to be used for gun safety education, Required permit to conceal carry, Background checks to purchase, Gun-free school zones, Red flag laws known as extreme risk legislation, Parental liability, Regulation of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Adopted: 6/17/2024

20. GOVERNMENT/CIVICS EDUCATION

STATEMENT OF POSITION

This position addresses the need for a comprehensive curriculum which teaches the skills needed for active and productive civic engagement, in age-appropriate ways, for grades K-12.

Adopted: 6/17/2024

Amplifications or background of LWVAK positions may be found at:

<https://alaskalwv.org/official-positions-and-bylaws-page-national-and-local/>