



# STATE PROGRAM RECORD

1957 - 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

This publication serves as a record of positions adopted by LWVWY since 1957 and also as the basis for advocacy and other League activities in Wyoming.

State program subjects are suggested by members and local Leagues, chosen by delegates to the state convention, and studied by the membership with the help of study aids compiled and furnished by the state board. Members come to consensus on program items and actions to deal with the identified issues. The state League then takes a position based on member consensus, and action is taken to implement this position through lobbying for or against legislation, informing the public, monitoring the administration of existing legislation, testifying at public hearings/meetings, or other appropriate means.

LWVUS has adopted a national program in a similar manner, which covers most of these issues and others. National programs are published in the book Impact on Issues which is available as a download on the League Management site (<https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>) or can be ordered on the League site or from Amazon. Those positions are not reprinted here except in those cases where the LWVWY has taken significant action on a national position, such as with ratification efforts of the Equal Rights Amendment. League policies prohibit state and local Leagues from adopting program issues that contradict LWVUS positions, but they are able to use national positions in lobbying at the state and local level.

## LWVUS Mission, Vision, and Value

OUR MISSION

OUR VISION

OUR VALUE

***Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.***

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

### **Nonpartisan Policy**

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

## PREFACE

The Wyoming State Program Record consists of program positions that were adopted at state conventions and guidelines that were developed by the state board of directors from the consensus process. The guidelines offer specific means of implementing or lobbying for a position.

The adopted positions can be changed only by convention action. The guidelines may be amended by the state board to reflect changing emphasis on the position, but changes must be within the framework of the original position.

## Principles of LWVUS

The League of Women Voters (LWVUS) believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government 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 LWV believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The LWV 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 LWV believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; 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 that effect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The LWV believes cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace (Impact on Issues 2018-2020, p. 6).

*The Principles are "concepts of government supported by the League. The Principles serve two functions, according to the LWVUS Bylaws: 1) authorization for adoption of national, state, and local program (Article 12 Section 1), and 2) providing a basis for taking action at the national, state and local levels (Article 12 Section 2). As for action to implement the Principles, the appropriate board authorizes the action once it determines that member understanding and agreement do exist and that action is appropriate. As with other action, when there are ramifications beyond a League's own government jurisdiction, that League should consult other Leagues affected.*

## History

Equal suffrage for women, ratified in 1920 as the 19th Amendment, led to immediate organization of the LWWUS. This new organization's objective was to educate women to their new responsibilities of full citizenship. Gradually Leagues were organized in communities across the country; by 1954 there were four units in Wyoming. The state League began with the first state convention in Worland in June 1957. Bylaws were adopted, and directors for the League of Women Voters of Wyoming (LWVWY) were elected.

As a requirement for recognition by the LWWUS, a "Know Your State" study was completed. Information gathered in this study was published in a booklet entitled "A Look at Wyoming Government." This was the first state League publication for general distribution. It was revised in book form as Look at Wyoming Government 1970, 75, 79, 89 and 2006

# WYOMING LWV STATE PROGRAM

## HUMAN RESOURCES/SOCIAL POLICY

### CRIME AND CORRECTIONS

#### POSITION

Wyoming should adopt a more rehabilitative and less punitive philosophy toward incarceration (Adopted 1976). The Legislature should adopt legislation to make acts of bias, hate or malicious harassment a crime (Adopted 1999).

#### GUIDELINES

Responsibility and planning should be centralized within a professionally staffed agency. Academic and vocational programs in all correctional institutions should be continuously evaluated.

Adequate counseling, psychological testing, pre-release and post-release programs should be provided.

Prisoners' rights should be clearly defined.

Young and first-time offenders should be separated from hardened criminals.

Personnel should receive adequate salaries and in service training.

Work Release and similar programs should be expanded.

Minimum standards for county jails should be mandatory.

More community-based treatment facilities and programs for both adults and juveniles should be made available.

The efforts of police, court systems, welfare agencies, schools and other public and private institutions should be coordinated.

All Wyoming residents, regardless of membership or perceived membership in a particular group, should feel safe from intimidation, fear, and violence (Adopted by resolution 1999).

#### HISTORY

In 1973 the LWVWY began a study of "corrections in Wyoming with emphasis on facilities for rehabilitation" as part of a larger study on the reorganization of Wyoming government. "Correction Study of Wyoming," publication #36, was produced in April 1974. The 1974 convention in Powell featured the Corrections theme; consensus was reached by January 1975. At the 1976 convention, direction was received to update the publication with emphasis on facilities and programs for women. The publication was reissued in January 1977 under the same title.

LWVWY co-sponsored a corrections workshop in Cheyenne in February 1977. A motion at the 1977 convention in Jackson to continue studying corrections with emphasis on juvenile justice failed.

LWVWY has used the corrections position to lobby for community-based correctional legislation and to support a women's facility. The women's facility in Lusk was opposed by the LWVWY because it did not meet the site criteria developed for the Board of Charities and Reform nor the guidelines set by LWVWY.

At the 1983 convention the corrections item was moved from Government to the Human Resources/Social Policy heading.

At the 1985 state convention, members adopted a new study item to explore the functions Board of Charities and Reform with emphasis on the feasibility of establishing a State Department of Corrections under the executive branch. Since then, a Wyoming Department of Corrections was established as a Cabinet level department. LWVWY has continued to monitor prison expansions and construction plans.

Under the aegis of the LWVUS voting rights position, we have lobbied for the restoration of voting rights for convicted non-violent felons who have served their terms. Legislation to this effect was enacted in the 2003 legislative session. Further legislation to reduce the waiting period before such rights are restored has been unsuccessful.

In October 1998, Matthew Shepard was fatally beaten in Laramie during a robbery and abduction. In reaction to worldwide coverage of this event, the Wyoming LWV adopted a resolution in 1999 seeking some form of hate crimes legislation. As of 2019, nothing has passed the Legislature.

## **VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

### **NATIONAL POSITION**

**The League of Women Voters of the United States supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support:**

- **Public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence**
- **The active role of government and social institutions in prevention violent behavior.**
- **The allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence**

**(LWVUS Impact on issues 2022-24)**

### **WYOMING POSITION**

**The League of Women Voters of Wyoming supports Action and Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous People, including:**

- 1. Increase and expand data collection systematically across all local, county, and state law enforcement jurisdictions.**
- 2. Public awareness through fact-based information and increased positive media coverage.**
- 3. Support and work with the Wyoming State Task Force for MMIP to increase awareness and work to develop next steps.**

**(Adopted by the delegates at the LWVWY State Convention 2023)**

## **CHILD CARE**

### **POSITION**

**Establishing regulations governing the operations of child care facilities should be the responsibility of state government. The state should provide adequate training for providers and for licensing officers. Regular inspections are needed to ensure quality facilities and care. Local governments should be responsive to community child care needs (Adopted 1983, 1997, 1998, 2001).**

### **HISTORY**

In 1981 state convention approved a study of day care in Wyoming with emphasis on the regulation of facilities. The study continued in 1982, and publication #53, "Day Care: Wyoming Law and Issues," was produced in December 1982. The state sent out a child care facility survey to providers and parents in 1997. From results, state position was slightly modified with emphasis on need for regular inspections and training of providers with additional support to accomplish these. The 2001 state convention approved changing the term "day care" to read "child care" as the Title for this section and to be reflected in the Table of Contents.

The state has instituted programs to train child care workers and tighten the licensing of child care facilities, measures LWVWY has supported.

## **EDUCATION**

### **POSITIONS**

**Quality education should be provided from kindergarten through the community college level; the state should assume funding (Adopted 1966, 1968, 1971).**

**The state should maintain a public school financing system that meets the educational needs of all Wyoming students K-12 and is based on actual costs. Every student should have equal access to funding provisions of the system (Adopted 1998).**

### **GUIDELINES**

Schools should strive for academic excellence. Students should exhibit competence in the basic skills; reading, writing, and mathematics.

Students should develop acceptable competence, skill, understanding and /or direction in physical and mental health, moral and ethical behavior, communications skills, human relationships, citizenship, natural and scientific environment, fine and practical arts, and economic and vocational affairs.

School districts should be organized in geographically cohesive areas.

Revenue for education should come from sources other than local property tax.

A program of quality education should include:

- quality teachers who know their subjects, understand pupils, and know best how to teach them;
- a reasonable class size to permit the teacher to function at his or her best;
- kindergarten classes for all beginning schoolchildren;
- special programs for socially, emotionally, and developmentally disabled children;
- programs for gifted and talented students;
- technical vocation training in association with academic programs;
- safe, clean, and adequate school buildings with areas for specialized work, for

- instance music rooms and science laboratories;
- guidance and counseling services with the necessary testing programs;
- mutual involvement of school and community, including support and cooperation for achieving continuity in regular school schedules in order to emphasize academic quality and reduce disruption of the school day for teachers and students (Guidelines updated 1983).

## HISTORY

In 1966, LWVWY supported a constitutional amendment to levy a county wide tax of 12 mills on the dollar for support of the public schools within each county. This amendment was ratified by the voters, thereby equalizing property tax resources for education within each county. Efforts to equalize the tax burden should come from sources other than local property tax because most school districts do not have adequate tax bases to provide quality education.

The League has supported increases in the classroom unit figure at each session of the legislature since 1967, but the amount appropriated has never been sufficient. The 1971 statute that provided for those school districts with less than average assessed valuation for each classroom unit did improve equalization, but the wealthiest district in Wyoming still had twice the available resources of the poorest district.

In 1969 legislative session, the League worked with the State Department of Education, the Wyoming Education Association, and others for passage of the complete recodification of school laws. Among other changes, recodification required mandatory reorganization of school districts. The League participated in hearings on the redistricting process at both the local and state levels.

In the 1978 Budget session, the League lobbied successfully for a bill, which allowed the legislature to determine the method of distributing revenue from the land income fund. The amendment passed in the general election of 1978.

The LWVWY published a fact sheet in 1979 on funding of Wyoming public schools: "Is Education Funding in the Equality State in a State of Equality?" (Publication #47).

In January 1980 the Wyoming Supreme Court declared "the Wyoming system of school financing unconstitutional in that it fails to afford equal protection in violation of the Wyoming Constitution." A select legislative committee was appointed to form proposals for the 1981 legislature. The Wyoming Supreme Court set the date for constitutional compliance at July 1, 1983, giving the legislature time to present a constitutional amendment to the people for approval in the 1982 general election, and to pass subsequent laws implementing the amendment.

The Wyoming Supreme Court handed down decisions 1995-2007 that directed the Legislature to devise a cost-based system of school financing and construction that made the property wealth of the state available to all children. The court finally declared the system substantially in compliance with the Wyoming Constitution in 2008. The Wyoming school finance system is designed to provide an equal opportunity for each Wyoming school child to receive a quality education. The new formula is based on number and needs of students (2008).

A quality education is defined by the Legislature as the proper education ensuring both the ability to participate fully as a citizen and an opportunity to seek post-secondary education or other options such as productive employment. The State Board of Education

sets statewide academic standards, and the Legislature prescribes a basket of educational goods and services guaranteed to each student, composed of a common core of knowledge and skills. The “basket” also includes programs for special needs.

In 2006, the Legislature created the Hathaway Scholarship to direct the state’s mineral income to students seeking post-secondary education at the University of Wyoming or the seven community colleges.

## **EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (ERA)**

### **POSITION**

**Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and to bring laws into compliance with the goals of ERA** (Position of LWVUS, adopted 1972).

### **HISTORY**

The LWVWY actively supported ratification of the proposed 27th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Ratification was achieved in the 1973 legislative session. Rescission efforts initiated in the 1977 and 1979 legislative sessions were defeated through the efforts of a coalition of groups including LWV. In July 1982 ERA died nationally for lack of ratification by three states. By July 1983 another similarly worded amendment was introduced and failed in the U.S. House.

In 1978 the LWVWY supported a proposed state constitutional amendment allowing women to work in the mines. *State Voter* articles were prepared to keep women apprised of their rights and problems of equality under the legal system of Wyoming. LWVWY attention continues to focus on changes in gender terminology in state statutes.

## **HOUSING**

### **POSITION**

**There should be local and statewide minimum standards for the regulation of manufactured housing and mobile home parks.** (Adopted 1980, 1998)  
**State financial assistance should be provided to help restore, rehabilitate and purchase existing housing** (Adopted 1978, 1998).

### **GUIDELINES**

Mobile home park regulations should be enforced by local governments if possible. State enforcement should be provided for areas with no adequate local enforcement. A system for the gradual improvement or phasing out of existing substandard parks should be implemented (Guidelines adopted 1978, revised 1983).

### **HISTORY**

The LWVWY has acted at the state and local levels on this national program item. The Human Resources/Social Policy item of the LWVUS seeks to promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and poverty. The focus has been on equal access to education, employment and housing.

In the field of housing, League action has been toward enforcement of existing fair-housing laws and expansion of the low income housing supply. Some local Leagues in Wyoming did housing surveys and publications on housing.

A 1978 state housing study resulted in "Housing in Wyoming, Safe-Sound-Sanitary Shelter for All," publication #48. Positions adopted through the consensus process as a result of this study included #2 above. Two other guidelines on the Wyoming Department of Economic Planning and Development, as coordinator of state housing programs and supporting increased bonding limits for the Wyoming Development Authority, were dropped by the state board in 1983 as they either had been accomplished or were no longer relevant with changing economic circumstances. At the same time, position #2 above was slightly reworded to remove "increased" from the start of the sentence to reflect current conditions.

In 1980 LWVWY published two housing fact sheets, one on mobile homes and mobile home parks and one on landlord/tenant relations. Position #1 above on mobile home parks was adopted, but no consensus was reached on landlord/tenant relations. The 1983 state convention directed further public education on landlord/tenant relations.

## **NURSING HOMES**

### **POSITION**

**Wyoming state standards should promote the achievement of quality care in nursing homes. Wyoming should provide state support for alternatives to institutionalized nursing home care** (Adopted 1978, revised 1985).

### **GUIDELINES**

Licensing for nursing homes should be consistent with other professional license fees required by the state.

Annual inspections should be conducted by a qualified team in order for nursing homes to maintain their licenses.

Administrators should be given an opportunity to respond to deficiencies noted by the team.

Deficiency reports should be available to the public.

Fines should be imposed for continuing deficiencies.

Nursing home condition should be monitored between visits of the inspection team.

Nursing home administrators should be licensed, and continuing education on gerontology should be required for license renewal.

State-funded training for nursing home aides should be provided.

### **HISTORY**

The Laramie League instigated this study in 1976 as a part of an ongoing study of state government reorganization. Problems of insufficient care in some homes prompted the interest. Consensus was first reached by the Casper League with other Leagues considering concurrence in 1978. From these studies, a position was formed. The LWVWY published "The Golden Years: Does Wyoming Cope?" Publication #42. This position was revised at the 1985 convention to reflect improvements made by the State of Wyoming since the original position was adopted.

# ELECTIONS

## APPORTIONMENT/REAPPORTIONMENT

### NATIONAL POSITION

The LWVUS believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment.

### HISTORY

Leagues in 33 states already had positions on apportionment when, in 1965, the LWVUS Council adopted the study. By January 1966, the LWVUS had reached member agreement on a position that both houses of the Legislature must be apportioned substantially on population. The 1972 convention extended the position to cover all voting districts.

The overriding conviction behind the League position on apportionment is that a population standard is the fairest and most equitable way of assuring that each vote is of equal value in a democratic and representative system of government.

State and local Leagues have applied the position to apportionment issues within their jurisdictions since the adoption of the national position.

In 1981, the Legislature reapportioned the House, using a divisor of approximately 7,000, to seat 63 representatives roughly on the basis of population, one representative and additional representatives for each major faction over the 7,000 divisor.

Niobrara County, with a population of approximately 2,900, did not qualify for a representative under this formula, but the legislature decided to follow the Wyoming constitutional requirement that there be a representative from every county in the House. (A similar provision in the state constitution for the Wyoming Senate had been declared null and void by a 1967 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.) This gave Niobrara County its own representative, making the total representation 64 instead of 63. The legislature added a provision that, should the decision be declared unconstitutional, Niobrara and Goshen Counties would become a representative district, sharing two representatives.

At the 1981 state convention in Riverton, the LWVWY voted to initiate a lawsuit against the state, challenging this apportionment on the basis of previous "one man, one vote" decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court. Deviation in representative districts approached 89% with Wyoming's 1981 apportionment, and past Supreme Court decisions had allowed less than a 16% deviation.

The lawsuit was filed by individual League members across the state. The case was tried by a three-judge panel of Federal District Court judges who found in favor of the state, against the League position.

At the 1982 state convention in Cody, the LWVWY supported a budget, which included money to appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. The high court accepted the case, but in June 1983, in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the lower court decision should stand because the court believed Wyoming had made a case

for the tradition of maintaining county representatives. The ruling indicated a more lenient attitude was acceptable for application of the one-man, one-vote rule in state legislatures than it was for federal congressional districts. (In the same court session, the Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that New Jersey could have not more than 1% deviation in setting congressional election districts.)

Wyoming's Constitution requires apportionment of the Legislature after every federal decennial census. After the 1990 census, the Legislature's reapportionment proposal was to maintain the system of county representation. Again, as in 1980, LWVWY members joined others and filed suit, this time successfully. The result was single-member legislative districts in the House and Senate, delineated in the 1992 legislative session using census information that gave the House 60 seats and overlapping Senate districts with 30 seats.

## ELECTION LAWS

### POSITION

**Wyoming election laws should prevent fraud, promote accuracy, facilitate proper registration of voters, ensure a secret ballot, and encourage an active electorate. Election laws should be enforceable and feasible to administer, with responsibility clearly defined at all administrative levels (Adopted 1959, 1967).**

### GUIDELINES

Signature identification should be required.

Hours for polling should be (maintained at) twelve hours.

Uniform and mandatory training of election clerks and judges should be required.

Registration of voters should be allowed in more accessible locations.

### HISTORY

With League support, the 1969 legislature established a Statute Revision Commission to correlate and revise the election laws and to prepare legislation for revision of the minor court system. In 1970, an advisory council to the commission was formed; LWVWY was represented on the council by the state president.

The Commission presented the 1971 legislature with a proposed Election Code. The legislature passed a small portion of the proposed Code, including Bond elections for property and non-property owners. The literacy requirement for voting was removed, and "short-resident electors" were permitted to vote for president and vice president to comply with U.S. Supreme Court decisions. In 1972, the Wyoming Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the residency requirement of one year and ordered it reduced to 30 days.

After interim subcommittee work in 1972, the legislature passed the 1973 Election Code. LWVWY submitted a statement and testified in the committee on the proposed Code working closely with various legislators to incorporate League positions into the code.

This Code eliminated any state residency requirement, although one must register to vote 30 days before the general election. Polling place hours were extended to 11 hours (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.), and county clerks were required to hold training sessions for

election clerks and judges, although attendance is not mandatory. Door-to-door registration is not allowed, but the 1973 law allows county clerks to maintain registration facilities outside the county clerk's office in publicly owned buildings.

In 1977 the Wyoming League found itself in conflict with the position of the LWVUS on the subject of prior registration. The LWVUS president testified in favor of a proposed bill, the Universal Registration Act of 1977 that would permit voter registration at federal elections. A survey of the Wyoming membership showed that they wished to retain the position for prior registration.

In the 1985 legislative session, LWVWY worked to change poll opening hours from 8 a.m. to 7 a.m. The League gathered endorsements from several county officials, compiled statistics from other states and presented the material to the House committee. The bill became law.

The League of Women Voters opposed a ballot initiative to impose term limits on legislators (three terms) and top elected officials (two terms). However, Wyoming voters approved the limits in 1992 by a 75 percent vote. The Legislature later changed the legislative limit to 12 years for both House and Senate members. LWVWY supported several unsuccessful legislative attempts to remove the term limits. In 2004, several legislators challenged the limit on the number of times a legislator could run for office, and the Supreme Court agreed it was unconstitutional. The Legislature repealed the legislative limits in 2005. The Supreme Court has not been asked to rule on term limits for the top five elected officials.

LWVWY won a \$3,500 grant from the LWVUS project "Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary by Defending the US Constitution" to write a voters' guide for judicial retention for the 2008 General Election. The guide included survey information from members of the Wyoming State Bar and answers to questions sent out by LWV to all judges standing for retention. Results were posted electronically on LWVWY's Web site, and local Leagues printed hard copies. LWVWY is concerned that Wyoming's judicial "merit selection" system is weakened by the lack of informed involvement of voters in the retention process.

## **VOTER REPRESENTATION/ELECTORAL SYSTEMS**

### **NATIONAL POSITION**

**Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters. (LWVUS Impact on Issues 2022-24)**

### **WYOMING POSITION**

**The League of Women Voters of Wyoming supports Open Primary Elections in which all candidates are placed on the ballot regardless of political affiliation and the two candidates per open seat with the most votes, regardless of party affiliation, advance to the subsequent general election.**

**The primary election would also be open, meaning all registered voters, regardless of their political affiliation, can vote in the primary election. This is known as a top-two primary. (Adopted by the delegates at the LWVWY State Convention 2023)**

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### POSITION

**There should be a single state agency with jurisdiction over all environmental concerns. The interstate effect of environmental impacts should be a part of the decision-making process** (Adopted 1972, 1978 Also see LWVUS position Impact on Issues).

### HISTORY

In 1972, the League adopted a water quality position, which called for a single environmental agency or a water control agency with jurisdiction over all types of water pollution. Since the formation of DEQ in 1973, the League has monitored its activities, written testimony, and promoted citizen participation in DEQ activities. This state agency has jurisdiction over land, air, and water quality in Wyoming.

In 1978, following the lead of the LWVUS, the LWVWY combined all program areas formerly included under "Environmental Quality" into a new program called "Natural Resources." This program now includes air quality, energy, land use, water quality and water resources as state items and includes action on national NR positions which also include solid waste, an area in which the state relies on the LWVUS position.

Action in the NR area sometimes overlaps component parts such as water or energy and can impact other league program areas such as education and human resources. Recognizing this, the 1978 Wyoming LWV Convention adopted the following resolution:

Whereas mining and mining impacts affect every program in which the LWV of Wyoming is involved and, whereas creative and innovative approaches are needed in order to address these impacts, be it resolved that a Natural Resources program committee be established for the coming program year with one representative from each League, provisional League, and unit at large. The purpose of this committee will be to study mining activities in Wyoming and to coordinate action.

Further direction was received from the membership to concentrate on uranium mining. The Wyoming state board wrote a proposal for a uranium mining education project, which was jointly sponsored by the LWV of Colorado. Funding of \$22,300 was

received for support of this project--\$3,300 from the LWV Education Fund, \$1,500 from Exxon USA, \$9,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy, Region VII, Denver, \$3,500 from the Wyoming Energy Conservation Office, and \$5,000 in-kind from local Leagues. Under this project, a three-day "Citizens Workshop on Uranium Mining" was held at the University of Wyoming, June 13-15, 1979. There were more than 100 registered participants at the workshop and 35 speakers. Follow-up projects included a one-day seminar in Gunnison, Colorado, in September 1980, and mailing of 300 uranium information kits to all news media and the high schools in Wyoming. In addition, a slide set illustrating uranium mining issues was prepared by the Wyoming LWV. Twenty copies were prepared and distributed to 16 volunteer slide show operators, many of whom attended a one-day training workshop in Riverton in February 1980. This slide set continued to be shown to Wyoming audiences in 1980, and copies were given to Leagues in Montana and South Dakota. In late 1980, uranium mining and exploration in Wyoming virtually ended due to lack of demand, partly a result of the Three-Mile Island nuclear accident in March of 1979. By 2008-9, however, mineral companies were sending exploration and notices of intent to mine uranium to DEQ

In 1985, the LWVWY received a grant from the Wyoming Solid Waste Department of the DEQ for a program on household generated hazardous waste. The project was funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and involved public meetings in 10 Wyoming towns culminating in a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day in Casper.

## **AIR QUALITY**

### **POSITION**

**Wyoming energy resources should be developed with proper regard for continued maintenance of air, land, and water quality. The need for new energy development should be demonstrated, with conservation considered as an alternative to development.**

### **GUIDELINES**

The effects of air pollutants on the health and welfare of people, livestock, wildlife and vegetation should be determining factors in state energy development decisions. Potential air pollution sources should be prohibited from areas where pollution is already high and from areas where air temperature inversions are known to occur regularly. The degradation of air quality across state borders should be a consideration in decisions on the siting of industrial facilities. Protection of human health should be the primary goal in regulating air quality, and cost-benefit analysis should not be considered the sole basis for regulation. (Revised 1983)

## HISTORY

LWVWY has written testimony supporting state and federal air quality standards. Special emphasis has been placed upon keeping air quality in federally owned parks and monuments in Wyoming included in the Class I air quality category established by federal regulations. This position formerly was part of our energy position.

## ENERGY

### POSITION

**Wyoming energy resources should be developed with proper regard for continued maintenance of air, land and water quality. The need for new energy development should be demonstrated, with conservation considered as an alternative to development.**

### GUIDELINES

The state should provide educational, technical, and financial assistance for implementing conservation practices.

The state should develop and encourage the use of alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, geothermal, and recycled wastes.

State policies and regulations should encourage the use of energy efficient technologies.

The interstate effect of pollutants should enter into decisions by the state regarding the siting of industrial facilities.

## HISTORY

This program area began with support of the LWVUS energy conservation position, adopted by the national board in 1975. In 1976, the LWVWY testified on energy conservation regulations at a regional hearing, was represented at a regional workshop on energy conservation, and appointed the first director for energy conservation to the state board.

A \$10,000 grant was received from the governor's office to organize citizen participation in the Wyoming Energy Conservation Plan. As part of this grant, the League organized a three-day energy conservation conference, surveyed state agencies for conservation practices, funded a slide show on alternative energy projects in Wyoming, and sponsored a booth at the Wyoming Winter Fair.

Energy conservation measures supported by the League which were adopted by the 1977 legislature included a life-cycle cost analysis statute to affect state purchasing decisions and revisions in the authority of the state fire marshal's office to allow inspection of building plans for energy conservation measures.

LWVWY received a \$2,200 pass-through grant from the LWV Education Fund for five energy fairs held during the winter of 1977-78 in Buffalo, Casper, Laramie, Powell and Riverton. The Wyoming League was represented on the LWV Education Fund Committee during 1976-78. The League has monitored the Wyoming Energy Extension Service Pilot Project. Several League members serve on the Governor's Energy Conservation Committee, which advises both agencies.

In July 1980, the League received a \$6,000 grant from Western SUN to do a solar inventory of the state of Wyoming. A project manager and a treasurer were hired by the

state board. The project manager contacted someone in all 23 counties in Wyoming to be in charge of the survey in each county. Local Leagues were used wherever possible. Other contact persons were obtained through the local energy councils and by word of mouth. Each county received a base grant of \$100 plus \$7 for each 5,000 or fraction thereof in population.

Inventory forms from Western SUN were distributed to each county for their completion by phone, mail, or personal contact. Photographs of each installation were requested but not mandatory.

Federal lands within the State of Wyoming should remain in Federal control.  
**Adequate land use planning is essential in maintaining the quality of life in Wyoming. The public should be allowed to participate in land use planning decisions affecting federal, state and local governments in Wyoming (Adopted 1974, revised 1983, 2017).**

Approximately 450 forms were distributed around the state. A final report was given to Western SUN and also to all the contact persons and leagues around the state. The information included in the report covered the following: a) Number of systems by type (passive, active, wind) and by zip code; b) Home built versus commercial systems; c) Number of owners who used federal or other tax credits.

## LAND USE

### POSITION

### GUIDELINES

Plans should be developed to preserve open spaces, ranching, farming, natural beauty and aesthetic values, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, historical and archeological sites.

Legislation should be enacted to provide tax incentives and/or penalties to preserve prime farm and ranch land, control plant siting, stringently control air and water pollution, provide proper management of flood plains, and control disposal of radioactive materials.

Surface land should be restored after mining, and surface owners should be adequately compensated for damages.

Industry should assume some responsibility for increased demand on community services accompanying population growth.

State and federal government should provide special aid to impacted areas.

Development should be permitted only where irreparable damage to wildlife areas or areas of unique scenic beauty will not occur.

State and federal government should cooperate in planning use of federal land in Wyoming.

State and federal land use planning should delegate as much control as possible to local governments.

State assistance should be provided for local planning.

State planning should control areas of critical or statewide concern.

Land use and industrial siting decisions should be made in cooperation with other regional governments.

Lands under control of the federal government [as of 2017] should be retained by the

Federal government; control should not be transferred to the State of Wyoming.

## HISTORY

A land use questionnaire circulated to the LWV membership in 1974 resulted in the land use position. LWVWY monitors the activities of state agencies for land use and plant siting and supports adequate funding and the continued existence of these state agencies.

The LWVWY joined with state Leagues from the six states served by the Federal Region VIII, headquartered in Denver to form the LWV Mountain Plains Coalition, called "Six for VIII". Other state Leagues were Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah. The coalition coordinated efforts of the six Leagues in dealing with problems associated with long-range environmental and social effects of natural resource development. The Wyoming League, represented on the steering committee, participated in a "Six for VIII" project on social impacts of coal development, a conference held at Billings in 1977 and funded by "Resources for the Future".

Actions in the land use area continue to center on the development of public support for the concept land use planning. "Wyoming: A Land Use Inventory," compiled by the League in 1973, is a key reference in this effort. The LWVWY was represented on the LWVUS Education Fund Land Use committee for 1978-79.

The 2017 LWVWY convention adopted an amendment to the land use position stating "we oppose efforts to transfer Federal lands to state control. We support public input on management of Federal lands." This is consistent with Article 21, Section 26 of the Wyoming Constitution which states: "The people inhabiting this state do agree and declare that they forever disclaim all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries therein."

## WATER

### POSITION

**Wyoming should have a comprehensive water planning process designed to provide adequate water resources and acceptable water quality with continued opportunities for public participation in water-related decisions (Adopted 1969, 72, 73, 78).**

### GUIDELINES FOR WATER RESOURCES

Wyoming should adopt a Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Wyoming should pursue the process for including Wyoming rivers in the national Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Wyoming water laws should include recreation as a beneficial use of water.

Wyoming water laws should include in-stream flow as a beneficial use of water.

Minimum stream flows should be established and maintained where appropriate.

Agricultural use of water should be encouraged.

The planning process should identify how the "best public interest" can be served in water project and allocation decisions.

The state should assess the effect of energy development and related activities on the quantity of groundwater before further development is permitted.  
The state should develop a planning policy and criteria for judging water priorities for projects. (Adopted 1983)

## HISTORY

The League studied Wyoming water resources in 1969, which led to support for recreational water use and the wild and scenic rivers concept. In 1972, a grant from the Wyoming Recreation Commission financed a League-organized Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers seminar to promote citizen awareness of this issue.

In the 1973, 75, and 77 legislative sessions, the League supported various stream preservation measures, which were unsuccessful. The League has also supported federal studies on three Wyoming rivers for possible inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Legislative lobbying continues on in-stream flow and recreational use of water.

In 1976-77, League members participated in studies of the Powder, Tongue, and Clark's Fork, Wind, and Big Horn rivers. These studies were initiated by the Missouri River Basin Commission as part of the "Level B" Yellowstone and Adjacent Coal Area Study. In February 1978, the League sponsored a one-day water workshop in Cheyenne with a grant from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities.

## GUIDELINES FOR WATER QUALITY

The state should establish and enforce drinking water standards.

The state should license water well drillers.

The state should license and/or train sanitarians.

Wyoming should adopt a state plumbing code.

The state should establish groundwater quality standards.

## HISTORY

A water quality study in 1971 led to the League's water quality position and to support the concept of a state environmental quality agency and the formation of the Wyoming divisions with special emphasis on the water division.

The League has been represented on the state Advisory Committee for federal "208" planning efforts to control water pollution. In 1977, a grant was received by LWVWY from the Environmental Protection Agency to promote public participation in the "208" planning process for Wyoming. A drinking water workshop was held in the spring of 1974 for League members and representatives of other groups in the state. The League began lobbying for state drinking water standards in 1977, an effort that has been unsuccessful so far. Well-drilling license legislation failed in the 1975 and 1977. League support for this measure continues.

# ORGANIZATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT

## OVERALL POSITION

**The organization of Wyoming state government should promote efficiency and economy; ensure a representative, responsive and accountable legislative body; and provide authority for a responsible and efficient executive (Adopted 1970, 1972, 1978).**

## GUIDELINES FOR THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Votes in committees should be recorded.

Deliberations in the Committee of the Whole should be recorded.

The legislature should provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice to news media for public hearings.

Live radio and TV coverage of legislative sessions should be allowed.

Legislative salaries should be adequate.

Statutory requirements should be enacted to provide for the disclosure of all sources of income and financial interests of public officials, including state legislators and state governmental officials. (Revised 1983)

LWVWY will monitor the effects of 1998 ethics legislation and will continue to seek improvement of ethics laws, particularly in the areas of conflict of interest and enforcement

## GUIDELINES FOR THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Comprehensive reorganization of the executive branch should be achieved through a combination of constitutional amendments, statutes, and executive orders.

The number of governmental agencies should be reduced provided no essential public services are eliminated or drastically reduced (Revised 1983).

The governor should have the power to appoint department heads.

The executive branch should be organized in cabinet form and composed of department heads; departments should be based on function.

## HISTORY

This study was adopted at the 1969 state convention as: "An evaluation of the organization of Wyoming state government, executive, legislative and judicial branches." After initial study, this changed to a "study of the reorganization of Wyoming state government." A 1971 publication explained the Department of Administration and Fiscal Control (DAFC), the Legislative Service Agency, and the proposed constitutional amendment for a lengthened legislative session. This amendment was ratified in the 1972 general election, and the first budget session was held in 1974. League support of the state government position has included lobbying in every session of the legislature, testifying at committee hearings, and working with other groups on many issues.

In addition to lobbying in the state legislature, action on the state government position has included circulation of petitions to initiate a disclosure bill and representation

on a citizen's committee to draft a proposal for legislative salaries. Many Leagues and UALs have studied a particular agency or a department of the executive branch of interest to their membership.

At the 1985 convention, members voted to adopt an ambitious new study of local government bodies: "Study statutes governing municipal, county and other local governing bodies to address: 1) Adequate provision of the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers. and 2) Potential for allowing alternate structure for these governing bodies with a goal of recommending statutory changes to reflect consensus." LWVWY elected to make this a two-year study, with consensus expected in 1986, however, no report was produced and no consensus was ever adopted on this issue.

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

### **POSITION**

**Wyoming should maintain a merit selection plan for judges (Adopted 1976).**

### **HISTORY**

In 1975, the state board authorized a citizen education project on the merit selection of judges and the recall of judges in Wyoming in preparation for a constitutional amendment on the 1976 ballot. The committee's efforts resulted in Publication #39, February 1976, "Judging the Judges". No consensus was reached on the recall of judges, but there was strong support of the merit selection of judges. This position was affirmed by the 1983 state convention.

Later in 1976, the LWVWY president chaired a citizens committee to draft a redistricting plan for judicial districts in the state. The plan was adopted by the legislature in 1977 resulting in two additional judicial districts and two additional district judges.

LWVWY has been concerned about the lack of information available to voters for retention of judges. Since 2004 LWVWY has been reprinting the Wyoming State Bar publication which surveys bar members about judicial qualifications, and distributing it as part of our voter service activities in general election years. In 2008 LWVWY also published its own voter's guide for judicial retention.

## **INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL**

### **POSITION**

**Initiative, referendum and recall can be useful tools at the state level, and Wyoming laws should provide for reasonable use of these direct legislation methods (Adopted 1986).**

### **GUIDELINES**

Wyoming's present requirement of 15% signatures should be lowered. The previous gubernatorial election should be used as the base year.

Signatures from qualified registered voters should be required and the secretary of state should be the validating authority.

Wyoming should adopt a constitutional amendment allowing recall of elected state officials, with safeguards against abuse.

Wyoming should provide authority for citizens to initiate a recall of elected officials in cities, towns or counties.

## HISTORY

In 1984, the LWVWY studied and arrived at consensus on initiative, referendum and recall as they apply to Wyoming.

At the 2009 LWVWY Convention, the Cheyenne League approved a resolution to change the second guideline to remove the geographic distribution requirement.

## TAXATION

### POSITION

**State taxes should be broadly based, equitable, equally assessed, easily and economically collected. Counties, cities and towns should have adequate revenue-raising options. (Adopted 1964, 74) Sales and use tax returns to local governmental entities should be increased; 1% optional sales tax should be retained (Adopted 1978).**

### GUIDELINES

Measures should be adopted that would make property tax revenues from mineral production available to all local governmental entities on an equitable basis. (1980)

The tax burden for low-income persons should be alleviated (Adopted 1974).

Sales tax should be removed from grocery food purchases, with the state reimbursing local governmental units for lost revenue (Adopted 1978).

Training for assessors should be mandatory.

Uniform accounting and reporting methods should be used for all corresponding governmental units.

### HISTORY

The first sentence of position and the first sentence of guidelines form the first League position adopted by motion at a state convention. Originally a part of the education position, the taxation statement was adopted as a separate position to permit the League to work on the reduction of sales, use and ad valorem taxes for low-income persons and to work against a constitutional amendment (passed in 1974) that, in effect, prevents a state income tax.

“Tax Facts” was published in October 1974. A more comprehensive publication, “More Than You Want to Know ABOUT WYOMING TAXES,” was published in 1976. “Should All the Lines be Equal?” (1978) was followed later in the year by “Per Capita Amounts Available to Wyoming Counties, Cities and Towns from Specific Sources.”

“Mineral Severance Taxes--Friend or Foe?” was published February 1980. From that study came a consensus that there should be an increase in the percentage levied for the

Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund, and that measures should be adopted that would make property tax revenues from mineral production available to all local governmental entities (including cities and towns) on a more equitable basis.

A 2% increase in severance tax on oil and gas was passed by the 1981 legislature. One-twelfth of this increase was earmarked for the Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund. Additionally, more money was made available to cities and towns and counties for operating revenues from the 2% increase.

A publication, "Mineral Wealth and Wyoming Government," was published in December 1981. From it came the position that "Mineral severance tax rates should not be altered at this time." At the same time Wyoming League members stated that the national Congress should not place a lid on state severance taxes. As this is a national issue, no consensus was adopted.

In 1982 the League believed that "Mineral severance tax rates should not be altered at this time."

During the 1998-99 legislative sessions, the League believed: In raising revenue, one resource entity should not suffer to the benefit of the other. If there are to be increases, they must be broad-based and spread among all revenue sources and should be phased in incrementally with education funding as the priority for the state.

Exemption granted in the past should be examined as to future revenue sources. Property taxes and even a state income tax should be considered.

Provide secure funding sources as citizens should be able to count on established and consistent funding sources and not the threat of continued litigation.

The League supports substantially raising tobacco and excise taxes to address underage smoking, health care and the true costs to towns and counties.

For many legislative sessions the LWV League lobbied the Legislature to remove the sales tax on most food purchases in grocery stores. These bills failed until 2007 when Representative Ann Robinson from Casper began collecting several thousand signatures on a petition to put the food tax repeal on the ballot. The petition drive was unsuccessful but the citizen support that was demonstrated directly motivated the Legislature to remove the sales tax from most groceries. It took the Legislature two years to come up with a formula to replace the lost tax income to local government.

## **NATIONAL SECURITY / INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **SUMMARY, LWVUS POSITION**

**Promote peace in an interdependent world through cooperation with other nations. The strengthening of international organizations, arms control measures, and the resolution of conflict without the use of military force (Adopted 1983, 1986).**

### **HISTORY**

In 1983, funding was provided to the LWVWY by way of a pass-through grant from LWVUS, and from the Wyoming Council for the Humanities, for a special project "Global

Security, Local Perspectives.” The project included a series of four small-group discussions in a number of Wyoming towns, each led by a humanities scholar, an essay contest for high school students and college students/adults, and a one day conference in Cheyenne in February 1984, which was attended by more than 100 people.

The grant directors presented a synopsis of the project at the LWVUS small state’s conference in Park City, Utah in Nov. 1984. They also attended a national LWV symposium in Washington, D.C. where the grant was honored as one of the outstanding Education Fund Grants that year.

Since 2007, LWVWY appointed a representative to the LWVUS Liberty and Security Network. This network has gathered information from all states on national security, terrorism, and civil liberty issues and has published monographs and sponsored seminars on the topic.

## TOBACCO

### POSITION

**The LWV of Wyoming supports aggressive measures to decrease the use of tobacco products in Wyoming (Adopted 2001).**

### GUIDELINES

(“Tobacco” in this document refers to all forms of tobacco.)

#### LWVWY favors:

Local decisions about whether or not to require smoke-free public places and to determine to which establishments the ordinances will apply.

Dedication of any tobacco settlement funds that come to the State of Wyoming to (1) tobacco prevention programs, (2) enforcement of current laws, and (3) treatment of tobacco-related illnesses using best practices.

Support cooperation with the Wind River Indian Reservation leaders to continue to develop and implement on the reservation programs for tobacco prevention, enforcement and health treatment.

Tobacco prevention programs that deal with all forms of tobacco.

Wyoming laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to minors need to be enforced though vigorous merchant educational programs and appropriate fines for those who break the law.

### HISTORY

The guidelines reflect the fact that a lawsuit initiated by a number of states’ attorneys charged all tobacco companies with knowingly marketing a product harmful to health. Rather than litigate, the tobacco companies settled for a payment of funds to each state based on population, to be spent according to states’ preferences.

In 2001, the LWVWY believed the tobacco lobby would prefer the state Legislature to address this issue, in part because it is easier to spend lobbying money to influence one Legislature as opposed to many city councils. Wyoming health officials announced plans

to divert tobacco settlement funds to programs for children and health, not specifically for tobacco prevention. The Wyoming Legislature subsequently funded the Tobacco Prevention project, part of the Substance Abuse Division of the Wyoming Health Department.

Tobacco prevention programs are needed to discourage initial tobacco use by children and adults. Changing Wyoming's culture will be necessary regarding the use of tobacco products for all populations.

### **STUDY ITEM -adopted for study at the 2023 State Convention**

The delegates at the 2023 State Convention voted that the state League conduct a study of Home Rule as it applies to Wyoming and the Wyoming State Constitutional Amendment adopted in 1972.

# WYOMING LOCAL LEAGUES and STATE PRESIDENTS

By date of provisional League organization: (original name in parentheses)

CHEYENNE	1951
CASPER	1952
LARAMIE	1952
WORLAND	1954 (Disbanded 1959)
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY (POWELL / CODY)	1967 (Disbanded 2009)
SWEETWATER COUNTY (ROCK SPRINGS/GREEN RIVER)	1972 (Disbanded 1981)
TETON COUNTY (JACKSON)	1974 (Disbanded 2006)
CARBON COUNTY (RAWLINS)	1978 (Disbanded 2004)
EVANSTON	1978 (Disbanded 1997)
WINDRIVER (RIVERTON)	1978 (Disbanded 1985)
CAMPBELL COUNTY (GILLETTE)	1980
FREMONT COUNTY	2020

## WYOMING UNITS AT LARGE

By date of Organization:

LANDER	1969 (Disbanded 1970)
SHERIDAN	1969 (Disbanded ? )
WHEATLAND	1972 (Disbanded 1976)
BUFFALO	1975 (Disbanded 198?)
WORLAND	1975 (Disbanded 1976)
CONVERSE COUNTY	1979 (Disbanded ? )

## State Presidents

Gladys Jones	1957-59	Joe Golden	1989-90
Helen Hollister	1959-65	Phoebe Holzinger	1990-91
Ann Lindahl	1965-69	Linda Kirkbride	1991-95
Audrey Cotherman	1969-70	Rosemary Shockley	1995-97
Jane Maxwell	1970-75	Angie Kinnaman	1997-99
Ruth Rudolph	1975-79	Gladys Crane	1999-2001
Margaret Brown	1979-81	Deborah Bush	2001-05
Judy Knight	1981-85	Amy Williamson	2005-17
Barbara Stapleton	1985-87	Susan Simpson	2017-21
Lynne Fox	1987-89	Nancy Lockwood	2021-2025
Linda Barton	2025-		

State Program Record Updated at the direction of the LWVWY conventions 1987, 1995, 1997, 1998, 2001, 2009, 2017, 2019, 2023.