

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ILLINOIS 2009-2011 PROGRAM SUMMARY

POSITIONS

GOVERNMENT

Constitutional Implementation and Amendments: Support for League positions to implement, amend and uphold the 1970 Illinois Constitution.

County Government Structure: Support for expanded citizen initiative powers to address county government structure and support for changes in the Illinois County Executive Act.

Criminal Justice: Support for improved criminal justice procedures and alternatives to incarceration.

Death Penalty Abolition: Support for abolition of the death penalty in Illinois.

Gun Violence Prevention: Support for handgun and automatic and semi-automatic assault type weapon control.

Schools: Support for a public school system that is equitable in both quality for the student and financing for the taxpayer.

State Election Laws: Support for improved election laws and procedures applied uniformly throughout the state and opposition to term limits for members of the Illinois General Assembly. Support for election reforms that increase voter participation and are fair and equitable for all eligible citizens.

State Fiscal Policies: Support for a diversified revenue system which principally relies on a combination of broad-based taxes and user fees, is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive and simple.

State Redistricting: Support for a redistricting process which is timely, orderly and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness and contiguity and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Land Use: Support for a state land use policy that addresses the problem of conflicting uses for the land resources of Illinois.

Large-Scale Livestock Facilities: Support for strict regulation of large-scale livestock facilities on the state, regional and county levels.

Pesticides: Support for reduction in pesticide use and the promotion of non-toxic alternatives.

SOCIAL POLICY

Children's Services: Support for improved state and local services by Illinois state agencies serving children and their families.

Immigration: Support for state and local community efforts to provide orientation and counseling services for all immigrants. Support provisions for educational programs and materials on rights in the workplace for all workers, driving certificates for undocumented workers and the availability of auto insurance for holders of certificates. Oppose deputizing state and local police to enforce immigration laws and ordinances that penalize landlords for renting to or prohibit issuance of business permits to undocumented immigrants. Oppose extending the right to vote to undocumented immigrants.

Income Assistance: Support for income assistance and support services for all low income individuals and their families.

Mental Health: Support for comprehensive and coordinated services for adults and children with mental illness in both state facilities and community-based programs.

ACTION FOCI and STUDIES

FISCAL POLICY AND TAX REFORM: Promote efforts to address the inequities of the state fiscal system in order to provide stable, reliable and adequate revenues for public education and other social services.

CAMPAIGN AND ETHICS REFORM: Promote efforts to impose contribution limits, require full, immediate disclosure of all contributions, and to provide enforcement and monitoring mechanism to assure transparency.

TRUE CENSUS COUNT 2010 AND REDISTRICTING REFORM: Promote full participation of all Illinois residents in the 2010 Census in order to achieve a full count and to promote a redistricting process that is timely, orderly, transparent, and meets the basic criteria relating to population, compactness, contiguity, and the requirements of the 1965 U.S. Voting Rights Act and subsequent amendments.

UPDATE POSITION ON RECALL AND TERM LIMITS: These topics were controversial during discussions relating to the convening of a constitutional convention in 2008 and continue to be discussed in light of efforts in 2009 to impose term limits on legislative leadership. The current LWVIL position supports Recall only for elected judges and is found under the Constitutional Implementation and Amendments Position. LWVIL opposes Term Limits for members of the General Assembly. This position can be found under State Election Laws. This update is conditional upon League members' willingness to serve on a committee that will review these positions and make recommendations.

APPENDIX

GAMBLING: NO CURE FOR STATE'S FISCAL ILLS

Based on the State Fiscal Policy position, the League of Women Voters of Illinois has prepared the following statement opposing gambling as a solution to Illinois' fiscal problems.

The recent focus on the possibility of riverboats in Chicago and the suburbs distracts attention from the real fiscal problems that Illinois must address: a revenue system that is outmoded and structurally flawed, grows less than the economy and is therefore unable to provide stable funding for state programs and services from one year to the next, and unfairly burdens the poor.

The League opposes gambling as a solution to the state's fiscal problems for the following reasons:

- Gambling revenue is only a small slice of the state revenue pie. In FY1993, the total net revenue from gambling for Illinois state government comprised only 2.4 percent of the total state revenue of \$29 billion.
- Gambling revenue has low natural growth potential. It does not contribute to the ability of the state revenue system to capture and reflect long-term economic growth or to provide stable funding for state services and programs.
 - ✓ Revenues from horse racing and the lottery have been relatively stagnant since 1986, experiencing single digit growth rates (or declines). FY1993 saw the second decline in the past three years in lottery receipts. Introduction of new games and higher prices have been necessary to maintain public interest in the lottery.
 - ✓ Noting that Illinoisans wager a relatively high portion of their personal income in comparison to people in other states, the Illinois Economic and Fiscal Commission (IEFC) projects that Illinois may be nearing its gaming saturation point when the portion of income people are willing to gamble will have reached its limit.
 - ✓ The introduction of riverboats in Illinois has resulted in increased growth of overall gambling revenue, but continued growth is forecast only for the near future. According to the IEFC, "as the State nears its saturation point and as surrounding states also jump aboard the gambling bandwagon, revenue from gambling will likely begin to level off, resulting in increased competition between the various forms for the gaming dollar."
- Gambling is a regressive approach to raising revenue, disproportionately impacting those with lower incomes, and does not improve the overall progressivity of Illinois' revenue system.

Expansion of riverboats in Illinois would be one more stop-gap measure to shore up lagging revenue growth and one more excuse for lawmakers to avoid long-term solutions while Illinois' fiscal health continues to deteriorate.

Sources: Illinois Economic and Fiscal Commission, Wagering in Illinois, January 1994; Iris J. Lav, Relentless Decline: Illinois' Structural Revenue Deficit, March 1993; Jim Nowlan, "Fool's gold of Illinois governments," Tax Facts, September 1993.