

The League of Women Voters Decade of the 90's

The early 1990 campaign of the League of Women Voters was to "Take Back The System," by promoting citizen participation. The League wanted to make voter registration more accessible, provide information about candidates and the issues, and restore voter confidence and involvement in the electoral system. The League sponsored the Presidential Primary Debate of 1992 but not the Democratic and Republican Presidential Debates.

At the 1990 and 1992 League Conventions the League also looked internally on recruitment, growth, retention and renewal of League members. Ideas were presented to ensure that joining the League was easy and that members belonged on their own terms, with the League stressing diversity and the importance of all members at every level.

The League supported the reauthorization of the Clean Air Act of 1990. The Act promoted the development of regional strategies to reduce interstate air pollution. It was designed to curb the threat of acid rain, urban air pollution, toxic air pollution, and stratospheric ozone depletion. It also established programs to help ensure better compliance with the Act..

The League also worked for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1991, amending the 1964 Civil Rights Act by prohibiting discrimination for applicants and employees based on race, gender, color, religious or ethnic consideration. The Act also provided increased financial damages and jury trial in cases of intentional discrimination.

The League took a leading role in campaigning for legislation to make it easier to register to vote. The National Voter Registration Act, also known as "Motor Voter" was signed by President Bill Clinton in 1993. It enabled citizens to register to vote at motor vehicle agencies, by mail, and through public and private agencies serving the public. (An earlier version of the Act was vetoed by President George H.W. Bush in 1991.)

The League adopted a position on health care that promoted access to basic care and controls on health care costs along with support for early intervention for children at risk and violence prevention.

The league supported a position on gun control, for limiting the accessibility and regulating ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons for consumer safety.

The emphasis of the late 90's was "Make Democracy Work." It included increasing voter registration and turnout, campaign finance reform, civic education, diversity of representation,

civic participation, and voting representation for the residents of Washington D.C. It also promoted “Running and Winning” a program that encouraged young women to consider careers as political leaders.

On the international scene the League promoted programs on Women Power in Politics, Citizen Get-Out-The-Vote Campaign, Strengthening Women’s Rights, Women in Leadership Roles, and Grassroots Democracy in Africa, Bosnia, Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Belarus.

The League of Women Voters had a significant impact on governmental legislation on a local, state, national, and international level, throughout the decade of the 1990’s.

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Thank you to...

Nancy M. Neuman, *The League of Women Voters In Perspective 1920-1995*

Kay J. Maxwell, League of Women Voters U.S., *The League of Women Voters Through the Decades*

Celina Stewart, League of Women Voters U.S.

Barbara Stuhler, *For the Public Record, A Documentary History of the League of Women Voters*

United States Environmental Protection Agency