"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that one of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty". In addition, we believe the federal government must set "the minimum, uniform standards and guidelines for social welfare programs and should bear primary responsibility for financing programs" in order to meet the basic needs of individuals and families. While States and also local governments we believe have the secondary role of financing these programs which help in food needs, housing needs and income assistance, we have seen a tremendous negligence in the State of Illinois in taking on their responsibilities to meet these needs.

While employment may seem to be the most important issue in establishing a healthy and independent life for individuals and families, there are many reasons why self-sustaining employment may not be available to many.

The League works alongside Voices for IL Children, Chicago Jobs Council, Housing Action IL, Ounce of Prevention, IL Action for Children, IL Caucus for Adolescent Health, Business and Professional People for the Public Interest and The Responsible Budget Coalition for much needed services including quality child care, healthy nutrition, early childhood education through at least high school and now post-secondary education and fair and affordable housing for the family.

**EMPLOYMENT**
The LWVUS and the LWVIL have supported job training programs and any legislation that might arise to "strengthen employment protections under federal civil rights laws". We have supported pay equity and participated in Pay Equity events in Chicago and we encourage members to support such efforts around the State. Job availability is yet another large issue in the State. With many jobs requiring post-secondary education, it is more important than ever for Illinois to invest in education. However, would be student are now at risk of attaining this necessary piece due to the lack of funding for programs such as the Monetary Award Program [MAP] and other assistance to obtain family supporting jobs. As many parents need to hold two or three daily jobs, funding for child care is of utmost important in order to keep these jobs each day.

**INCOME ASSISTANCE**
The LWVIL continues to support the LWVUS position stating "the Federal government should bear the primary responsibility for financing programs designed to meet the basic needs of individuals and families". We also support the secondary state funding for income assistance and supportive services. With the Illinois budget unsolved for two years, we see very large needs going unfunded for the very services supported by the Leagues around the State.

**TRANSPORTATION**
The LWIL's position for supportive services includes "transportation systems should afford better access" for employment and housing, we have seen very little in place to carry this position out in our communities, especially outside of large cities. Individuals therefore often must have their own cars to enable them to get to their work and care for the needs in the families. Some individuals have to walk to their jobs when it is possible, even from town to town. Cars and the accompanying expenses are totally out of their financial means. Often biking from one community to another for the daily employment is an option for some workers. We note that this industry is undergoing major changes around the State in order to stay economically sound in business themselves.

**CHILD CARE-CHILDREN SERVICES**
The LWVUS position which the LWVIL uses in our advocacy "supports programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it." The LWVIL position states that the "State should play the leading role in meeting the needs of children and their families". With these principles in mind, we have witnessed a devastating effect of the budget impasse in Illinois. Knowing that birth to age 8 time in a child's life is a very important time for physical, cognitive and social/emotional development and plays a vital foundation for children's success in school and later in work and life, LWVIL has supported the crucial allotment of dollars to the agencies in their daily work. Many providers of these services have had to cut down their workers and even shut their doors due to not receiving promised
funding from the State. We look for the state funding for The Early Childhood Block Grant to help all children including
for children who show signs of developmental delays for various therapy services
according to the particular need.

In his 2018 Budget Proposal, the Governor has included +$50 M increase to the Early Childhood Block Grant; $151.3 M
increased to the Child Care Assistance Program to restore eligibility to families earning up to 185% of the Federal
Poverty Level; Level funding for DHS-funded home visiting; $4 M increase to funding for Early Intervention;
increased funding for English learners as part of an overall increase in support for education. This is information from
The Ounce of Prevention Fund in their Action Alert on Feb. 15, 2017.

HOUSING
Affordable housing for families and individuals is an around the Country issue. Accompanying services easily accessed
are of great importance to the stability of the children, youth employment, parental employment and generally healthy
living. Housing, whether Public Housing or private housing, is much needed around the Country and in Illinois. Cities
and other communities struggle with how to meet the housing for all. Senior citizens living on fixed incomes which are
often very low is a growing issue everywhere. League members are encouraged to follow several advocacy agencies such
as Housing Action Illinois, United for Homes Campaign and Low Income Housing Coalition in order to stay current
with both State and Federal legislation throughout the year. The public housing issue is a major issue, given the varied
limits on Sect. 8 vouchers as well as Project based vouchers. At least one Illinois community sponsors housing assistance
very low income senior citizens in that town which is supported by the town's taxes.

One State initiative is to amend Illinois Human Rights Act to include protections against discrimination based on legal
source of income. In addition must work is on the table re Foreclosure Prevention Program Graduated Fund Fee. Yet
another issue is how to mitigate the negative impact of evictions. We must advocate as a League for legislation
to increase access to affordable housing for extremely low income populations including people with criminal records.
We will be following the IHDA Tenant Selection Policies for People with Criminal Records. Federal legislation currently
being considered are HR 482 re local zoning decisions of the Protection Act of 2017.

Finally, as reported by the Responsible Budget Coalition following the Governor's Budget address, "the lack of a fully
funded budget is causing immense damage to our state's economic future."

"Over 1 million Illinoisans have lost services like meals for homebound seniors, treatment for individuals struggling with
mental health issues and home visits for at-risk young mothers"

"Illinois needs a fully funded state budget with adequate revenue so Illinois families and communities can thrive."

League of Women Voters of Illinois must continue to advocate for our member-supported positions