

Principles of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation by its citizens and that government bodies must protect the citizens' right to know by giving notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be assured the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible 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 affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that the development of international organization and international law is essential in the promotion of world peace.

The League of Women Voters has studied and developed positions on matters in three general areas: government, human resources, and natural resources. These positions are called the League Program. Their goals are as follows:

1. To promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsible to all citizens and that protects individual liberties as established in the Constitution;
2. To promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and poverty;
3. To promote the wise management of natural resources in the public interest and an environment beneficial to all life.

The Butte County League Program includes

- Butte County Government: Charter
- Housing
- Juvenile Justice
- Health Care Delivery
- Energy
- Water Resources of Butte County
- Bidwell Park
- Land Use and Planning
- Education
- Butte County Budgeting Process

Whatever the issue, the League believes that government policy, programs, and performance must meet these criteria:

- ▶ competent personnel with clear responsibilities
- ▶ coordination among agencies and levels of government
- ▶ adequate financing
- ▶ effective enforcement
- ▶ well-defined channels for citizen input and review

Some Common League Terms

Program/study: Governmental issues on the local, state, and national levels chosen by the membership for concerted study and action. Issue must be one on which government action is needed, on which government can solve, and one for which League can help seek the solution. Issue must have current need, community interest, and foreseeable effective citizen action.

Consensus: Agreement among a substantial number of members representing the membership as a whole, reached after sustained study and group discussion.

Position: A statement of conclusions drawn from a study, usually with specific objectives which League would like to see implemented.

Vertical Position: Authorization for one level of League to take action on a basis of a position reached by another level of League.

Action: Directed toward influencing what governmental decisions are made; may be writing letters, distributing issue-oriented materials, lobbying, speaking, monitoring governmental activities—limited only by the ingenuity of League members. League action must be approved by the Board.

Unit Meetings: The traditional system of League to provide give-and-take on issues within a small group.

Non-Partisan: “The League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. It shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.”