

The League of Women Voters of Washington Board of Directors received program items from local Leagues as prescribed in the LWVWA bylaws.

The LWVWA Board of Directors forwards the following items to the Convention, in compliance with the LWVWA Bylaws. Here are the titles and scopes of the four items submitted to LWVWA Board of Directors. Scroll down to see the full title and scope as adopted by the Board of Directors.

April 13, 2023 is the deadline for changes/corrections to the proposed items. Article XII, Section 12.2.a of the LWVWA bylaws:

“Local League and MAL units may submit proposals for changes in the recommended program or corrections in the not recommended program. Proposals received by the state board at least three weeks before the opening of the convention shall be considered by the board at a meeting prior to the convention at which time the board may change the recommended program. Such changes may not be voted on by the convention on the same day on which they are presented.”

Recommended Item Titles

Title: Multi-Member Districts with Ranked-Choice Voting. Education Project.

TITLE: Caregiving in Washington State: What exists and what is needed to support seniors and other vulnerable adults and their caregivers?

TITLE: Immigration and Immigrant Integration

Not recommended Title

TITLE: Access to Reproductive Health and End-of life Services in Washington Update

Recommended Items: Title and scope as approved by the Board of Directors

1. Submitted by the Bellingham-Whatcom County League; supported by LWV-Seattle King County

Education Project

TITLE: Multi-Member Districts with Ranked-Choice Voting

SCOPE: This education project will look at Multi-Member Districts with Ranked Choice voting and how National League positions support this voting method. The League position supports improved voting methods but it doesn't say which ones. The position states:

The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards — that proportionally reflect the people they represent.

This project will look at voting processes and voting methods including single member districts, multi-member districts, first past the post voting, instant runoff voting, single-transferable

voting, proportional representation, rank choice voting and the redistricting process and how these voting methods impact redistricting.

The project will focus on a multi-member districts and how this voting method impacts redistricting, the pros and cons of this voting method, and whether/how this voting method is supported by current LWVWA and LWVUS positions. Project committee members will look to Leagues and other experts where this voting method is currently practiced to learn how they are educating voters, what the results have been in those jurisdictions, and the pros and cons of settling on one alternative method (i.e. alternative to the currently widely practiced method of plurality voting).

After a year of education, we will evaluate improvement in member understanding, and determine if our current position is enough to support ranked choice voting in multi member districts as a preferred voting method. Depending on the outcome, the project committee may propose a concurrence or update to current LWVWA positions.

2. Submitted by the LWV of Thurston County

Type: Study

TITLE: Caregiving in Washington State: What exists and what is needed to support seniors and other vulnerable adults and their caregivers?

SCOPE: With the aging of the population due to increased life expectancies and lower birthrates, an increased proportion of Washingtonians require long-term care to meet their basic needs. This care falls disproportionately on family caregivers, who provide the bulk of care for older adults. These caregivers are also central in ensuring access to health care and community-based social services. Research shows that family caregivers are predominately women, many of whom are employed outside their homes. When long-term care outside the home becomes necessary due to increased disability, the care available is limited, of variable quality, and extremely costly. While this proposal speaks specifically about seniors and their caregivers, these issues have implications for younger vulnerable adults who are unable to care for themselves and expect that most of the findings and recommendations of this study would apply to them as well.

3. Submitted by the LWV of the San Juan Islands

Type: Study

TITLE: Immigration and Immigrant Integration

SCOPE: This study will delve deeply into legislative options at the state level for enhancing the lives of immigrants and the role the League could be playing in ensuring immigrants have pathways to economic, social, and civic integration into the communities in which they live. It would also allow LWVWA to assess systematically the extent to which current WA state legislation, such as the 2019 Keep Washington Working (KWW) Act, is fulfilling the legislative intent to protect immigrants living in the state.

In carrying out the work, the team intends to build collaborative relationships with key nongovernmental organizations working on immigration issues affecting the state of Washington, including International Rescue Committee and other refugee resettlement agencies, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NIRP), Washington New Americans Program, Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest, and the Refugee Women's Alliance.

Not Recommended Item

Article XII, Section 12.2.c governs the handling of not recommended items.

Any recommendation for the program submitted to the state board at least three months before the convention but not recommended by the board may be adopted by the convention provided consideration is ordered by a majority vote and on a following day the proposal for adoption receives a 3/5 vote

Submitted by the LWV of the San Juan Islands; supported by the LWV of Seattle-King County

TITLE: Access to Reproductive Health and End-of life Services in Washington

Update

SCOPE: The U.S. Supreme Court in Dobbs found that there was no right to abortion stemming from a right to privacy. The study should review to what extent such rights are protected in the state under other rubrics including liberty and equal protection and how they might be strengthened. It should also address access and legal protections for women who come from other states to get services.

While reproductive rights are fairly well protected in Washington state, in practice access to those rights as well as to end of life/death dignity rights are significantly limited by the dominance of religious institutions, especially the Catholic Church in provision of health care. Many counties have only a Catholic hospital and some people may have to go outside their insurance network to obtain reproductive healthcare. Amongst a wide range of health issues that this situation affects, treatment for miscarriages and death with dignity can be especially problematic. Access to abortion for incarcerated women can be particularly challenging and deserves study. Nationally incarcerated women have abortions at a far lower rate than the general population.