

# Council '81

League of Women Voters, 1730 M St., NW, Wash., DC 20036 (202) 296-1770 May 11-14, 1981

MAR 13 1981

March 1, 1981 THIS IS GOING ON DPM

TO: Presidents of Local and State Leagues and ILOs

FROM: Ruth J. Hinerfeld, President  
League of Women Voters of the United States

RE: 1981 National Council

This is the official call to the 1981 meeting of the National Council of the League of Women Voters of the United States to be held from 1 p.m. Monday, May 11, 1981, to 12 noon Thursday, May 14, 1981, at the Capital Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C.

The national bylaws, Article X, provide that the Council shall be composed of:

2 delegates each chosen by the board of each state League

2 delegates each chosen by the Leagues of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands

the members of the national board

After each League's delegate quota is filled, each delegation may also include two visitors. Visitors pay the Council registration fee (\$55) but do not participate in the Travel Equalization Plan. They may participate in all Council activities except speaking on the Council floor or voting in plenary sessions.

Article X, Section 3 of the bylaws charges the Council to "give guidance to the board on program, methods of work, and budget as submitted by the board of directors. Upon the recommendation of the board or any state or local League, the council may change the program in the event of an emergency, provided that notice of the proposed change has been sent to the presidents of local and state Leagues at least 6 weeks in advance of the meeting of the council. The board shall give such notice of a change proposed by a state or local League provided it has been submitted at least 8 weeks in advance of the meeting of the council. (March 16, 1981) A two-thirds vote shall adopt any change. The council shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year and shall transact such other business as shall be presented by the board."

The proposed 1981-82 LWVUS and LWVEF budgets are being sent to all Leagues in this mailing. No program changes are being proposed.



TO: LL Presidents; DPM; St. Order

LWV-Texas

May 1981

FROM: Lois Carpenter, Program VP  
2603 Racquet Club Dr.  
Midland, TX 79701  
(915) 685-3289

LL Pres. (1); DPM; St. Ord.  
I. H. 1.  
Council - National

RE: Highlights from LWV-Texas Delegation to National Council

Diana Clark and I, having arrived on separate flights at separate airports, nevertheless found ourselves emerging from the raindrops in front of the Capital Hilton at the same moment. Thus began a smooth-running national council session.

During the first afternoon the main event was the vote on consideration of emergency program proposals. Concurrence with a composite position on handgun control was moved but not voted consideration. Also moved was concurrence with the Massachusetts League's position (the Teaneck, NJ proposal) on birth control and abortion laws, and it, too, failed to gain consideration. Diana then brought up the Political Accountability Rating (PAR) for discussion. National President, Ruth Hinerfeld, acknowledged receiving 25 letters of complaint from nine states. Delegates from Arizona, Ohio, Iowa, and Montana indicated problems with PAR, while Oregon spoke out in favor of it.

Diana moved that the LWVUS release PAR to state and local Leagues and let them decide on the wisdom of releasing it to the press. The motion failed. We understand that the national board will reevaluate the effect of PAR nationwide at its June board meeting.

For dinner at nearby restaurants that evening delegates were divided into small groups, each "hostessed" by a national board member. My hostess, Marilyn Reeves, led us to an excellent Chinese restaurant and a dinner that was delightful for the opportunity it provided to visit with other state Leaguers. But the really crowning touch was the fortune in the last (almost leftover) fortune cookie, truly a maxim for League members. It read: "Action is the proper fruit of knowledge."

Later that evening, following group discussions on the budget and grants management, Diana led a caucus on constructive ideas for cooperative fundraising. It was well attended by delegates from a dozen states and several national board members. Diana was then able to compile the recommendations and present them on the last morning during direction to the national board.

The highlight of Tuesday morning was a brief address, with question & answer period, by Vice President George Bush. When asked about support of the D.C. Amendment ratification, he at first said he couldn't recall discussing that with the President, but then remembered being opposed to D.C. having two Senators. We noticed security has been tightened since Carter addressed national convention last year -- for Bush's address all purses, briefcases, and tote bags were inspected.

Speaker for the ample luncheon was Frank Mankiewicz, now president of National Public Radio, who talked with fine humor on "The Role of the Media in Politics." That afternoon the plenary session included budget adoption (no major squabbles) and

- more -



briefing for our Day on the Hill. Among that evening's events were receptions -- one for state presidents with Ruth Hinerfeld, and one for other delegates with the Lobby Corps in the national League office.

Under clear skies at last, our Day on the Hill began with a coffee-&-doughnuts session with M/Cs in the Mike Mansfield Room in the Capitol. Attending from Texas were Richard C. White of El Paso, Jack Fields from Houston, and an aide to Kent Hance who represents the Lubbock-to-Midland-Odessa area. Lobbying on the Voting Rights Act amendments and Clean Air Act reauthorization, Diana and I called on offices of Senator Tower and Representatives Hance and Sam Hall, where we were cordially received and met with their aides for a discussion of these issues. We were also able to have a personal interview with a gracious Senator Bentsen. On most of these visits we were fortunate to be accompanied by Nancy Socknat, one of the two Lobby Corps members for Texas. Lunch with Tower's press secretary, a former member of the Midland League, was most enjoyable even though she brought news of the Pope's attempted assassination. Later we observed from the Senate gallery as they interrupted debate on Tower's Armed Services Bill to offer a unanimous resolution expressing sympathy to the Pope, condemning that violent act and pa sing for prayer.

We appreciated the hospitality room provided by ABC News and the opportunity to learn more about the importance of our Election Night Reporting.

Thursday morning Diana attended the fundraising panel discussion to learn more about direct mail campaigns, while I went to the health care exchange. National is still looking for funding for the health care study. . . . Then there was a brief plenary session and it was all over for another two years.

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JUN 1 1981

# Council'81

League of Women Voters, 1730 M St., NW, Wash., DC 20036 (202) 296-1770 May 11-14, 1981

## POST-COUNCIL SUMMARY

-- for all League presidents and DPM subscribers --

Much was the same, yet much was strikingly different. That must be the conclusion of anyone who reviews the Post-Council Summary of two years ago and then considers what should be said about this just-completed council. This, too, was a good council, an open council. This time, too, most of the state representatives were first-time council delegates -- a fact that in no way impaired their ability to evaluate one another's proposals and those of the national board . . . to appreciate the conflicting claims and the complementary strengths of the several levels of the League . . . to advise . . . to consent . . . to be conservative in the best sense of that word.

But how much has changed in the world around us! President Ruth Hinerfeld summed it up when she noted that "every one of our principal action commitments . . . is now straining against the headwinds of political sentiments" and the League is fated to be cast repeatedly "in the role of the loyal opposition." Inflation, a real worry heretofore, now dominates our own budget decisions, forcing staff cuts and corresponding cuts in services to Leagues -- cuts that are no longer likely to be bridged over by the *deus ex machina* of overhead from a federal grant or two or three. And the world around us keeps changing in other ways as well, with the electronic media an ever more formative part of American life, for good and for ill . . . with women who in days past would have chosen the League now weighing that choice against other options. These realities lay behind the three days of discussion, decisions, lobbying, sharing and advising that made up this council.

For many of those present, the president's address was the high point of the national Council. Not the President of the United States, but the president of the League of Women Voters, Ruth Hinerfeld. So much so that the full text of the speech -- which touched on many of the themes just noted -- is included with this summary.

There were other notables on deck, as well. Breaking a long-standing tradition, council delegates did not meet with the President in the Rose Garden. In his stead, Vice President George Bush came to the Capital Hilton -- candidly concerned about what kind of reception he would receive -- to speak briefly to "this leadership group about initiatives of this administration." The applause meter went off when he suggested that the League's President Hinerfeld "ought to be an ambassador some place" for the skill with which she handled his advance briefing. Bush's final words: "We need you . . . You're leaders. You're disproportionately effective in your communities."

The thesis of Tuesday's luncheon speaker, Frank Mankiewicz, President of National Public Radio, was that the skewed TV view of life has political impact: TV encourages us to think that life is tidy, but real life is messy. Speaking specifically on the matter of TV and political campaigns, he suggested that the nation may be getting close to requiring free TV time for candidates. On the emerging role of debates, he stated that "the League has made it certain that there will always be presidential debates, at least as long as the League sponsors them . . . As cable TV comes along, there will be more and more pressure to do debates at other levels." His parting shot was a challenge to Leagues: to think about acquiring a TV channel.

## BYLAWS

President Hinerfeld's address, originally scheduled to precede a side-ranging discussion about national bylaws, was "bumped" to a later time to accommodate Vice President Bush's



schedule. Nonetheless, it pithily pinpoints the subject that lay at the heart of the bylaws discussion: "the persistent policy debate" about the problem of declining membership.

The national board believes that technical assistance from the state and national level and local self-help cannot by themselves enable the League as a whole to turn membership trends around, and that the League therefore "needs to do what other organizations do: recruit and renew members directly through centralized, nation-wide direct-mail techniques. Local Leagues . . . resist this recommendation, which they perceive to be potential usurpation of their autonomy, competition for their members and an uprooting of League tradition . . . They are afraid that a national membership technology will drain the League of its unique quality as an almost ideal model of a grassroots organization." Certainly, the discussions among council delegates reflected these same concerns, the same wariness about making any changes in membership concepts.

Hinerfeld's address put forth the challenge -- one that must underly the discussions that will be going on throughout the League in the coming months, in preparation for convention: "Is it possible for the League to marry the democratic ideals of ancient Athens to the membership recruitment technology of the 20th century?"

Bylaws Chair Joan Rich reported in brief on this and other topics -- including the percentages required for program adoption -- dealt with in the five bylaws discussion groups into which council delegates were divided.

#### PROGRAM

Perhaps the most notable decision made by the delegates was made on the first afternoon -- and that was a decision not to do something. Of the five emergency program proposals that had met the pre-council deadline requirements, only two were brought to the floor for a vote for consideration. One was the Pennsylvania League's proposal for concurrence on handgun control; the other was the Teaneck (NJ) League's proposal for concurrence with the Massachusetts League's position on birth control and abortion. Neither item was voted consideration. Delegates appeared to take seriously the limits on their powers imposed by Article X, Section 3 of the national bylaws, which permits the council to "change the program in the event of an emergency." There was general discussion of this special council role vis a vis program and some sentiment in favor of a tighter definition of the word "emergency," as part of the preconvention bylaws review.

Many other points of program advice and recommendation were offered as well, with the broad area of election reform coming in for special attention. Delegates reported extensive interest on the part of local Leagues, and Ruth Hinerfeld passed along a recommendation from the Hill, as well. When she had testified a week earlier before the Senate Rules Committee concerning early poll closings, Senator Charles Mathias, who chairs the committee, told her that he was looking to the League to be active in the whole range of election issues.

Discussion on this subject merged, to a degree, with comments on election-time voters service. There was underlying agreement that sponsorship of the Presidential Debates is a good thing -- agreement salted with advice on particulars, such as the number of debates, the nature of the questioner-panels, the use of the word "debate," and greater use of League expertise.

After a thorough discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the Political Accountability Rating (PAR) in its present form, delegates defeated by a wide majority a motion to change the present system by releasing PAR only to state and local Leagues and letting them decide about releasing it to the press. It was agreed, however, that the wording of the disclaimer should be improved.

A Health Care exchange was attended by one delegate from each state (while her counterpart attended a simultaneous session on fundraising -- see below). League health care experts from Pennsylvania and Massachusetts reported on how they are helping Leagues in their states conduct preliminary studies while awaiting the funding that will underwrite a full-scale national study. The staff specialist charged with the funding search



reported on the status of that effort. An informal 'workshop' brought the Transportation buffs together to exchange problem-solving techniques. In addition, the Human Resources update came in for review at a program workshop -- one of four on Tuesday evening.

These workshops permitted a free flow of ideas among state leaders and between them and national board and staff. In the Government workshop, the main focus was on fair campaign practices; in the International Relations workshop, discussion centered on how to tune in on the highly successful techniques for localizing international issues; and in the Natural Resources workshop, the discussion ranged across the NR board.

The real moving and shaking on program took place not on the council floor but some blocks away, during the traditional Day on the Hill. The day was a long one -- starting with 8:30 stand-up breakfast in the Mansfield Reception Room of the Capitol, which was packed to overflowing with delegates and 57 members of Congress plus some 40 MCs' staff aides. On-the-spot briefings by top Hill leaders from both parties gave delegates a "feel" for the political climate in both the House and Senate. Detailed briefings the day before had equipped them with key talking points to back up a strong pitch to their own congressional delegation for renewal and strengthening of the Voting Rights Act and the Clean Air Act. New Jersey's efforts were literally spotlighted by a media team from WPIX that was readying a show for New York metro area consumption.

#### THE BUDGET

Though the council is primarily a deliberative, advisory conclave, it does adopt the national budget for the LWVUS and approve the budget for the LWVEF (which is formally adopted at the LWVEF's annual meeting in June). The PMP of \$11.00 was, of course, already set by the 1980 convention. A "money session" on Monday night aimed at answering questions and listening to delegates' comments appeared to meet the need for both information and comment. In particular, those who asked about coverage of national program by the "umbrella" Social Policy and Natural Resources Departments were assured that all major national program issues, including Urban Policy, would be covered, although the cuts in LWVEF staff would necessarily mean that servicing would be slimmer and priorities would have to be set.

With their questions answered at the informal evening session, delegates adopted the budgets unchanged, with almost no floor discussion. The budgets in question were sent to every League in February, although substantially modified at the March national board meeting, as reported in the Post Board Summary of that meeting. The budgets as adopted will be enclosed with the next third-class mailing.

#### SOME IMPORTANT "AND ALSO'S"

A council, like every other gathering around the League banner, is always more than can be conveyed by recapping formal actions, by singling out quotable quotes, or even by noting discussion themes and indicating the flavor of advisory comments. Not everything that matters fits neatly under such headings as Program or Budget or Bylaws. Herewith, some of the important "and also's" from this Council:

...Executive Director Harriet Hentges reported on the workings of staff and the national office. One highlight:

If I had to choose one word, I'd say that we're here to amplify -- to amplify the efforts of the volunteer. How do we do this? One way is by serving as a kind of central switchboard for the League -- receiving and synthesizing information from many sources, identifying problems, searching for solutions and forging out among ourselves possible alternatives and recommendations to present to the board so that their scarce time, on committees and at board meetings, is used to best advantage. Another way we amplify is to sieve and sift, from within the League and from others, the very best in management techniques and up-to-the-minute program information and to transmit it to you -- one on one by phone and letter, and in conferences, publications committee meetings and field service.



- ...Caucuses covered program and other concerns, including one on small and rural Leagues and one on a "positive approach to fundraising."
- ...An un-birthday party for the Litigation Department marked ten years of operation of the LWVEF's "public interest law firm" -- which has helped the League as a whole to move litigation from the bailiwick of a few pioneers to a standard option in the League's array of community serving tools.
- ...ERA balloons celebrated the success of the fundraising appeal to members -- who responded with a \$200,000 kitty to see us through this last critical year for ratification; there was also an ERA workshop to get on with the work.
- ...A bang-up panel and give-and-take on fundraising was attended by half of each state's delegation. Ann Viner, former national board member now heading up the LWVEF's planned giving program, laid out the start-up plan for interested delegates. Her phone number, for technical assistance -- 203-972-1530.
- ...Carol Reuter, Contributions Director for the New York Life Insurance Company, offered such valuable, well-organized insights about corporate fundraising -- from the corporation side of the table -- that her talk will be adapted for general use as a Management Newsbrief. And Robert M. Smith, vice-president of the firm that handles the League's national direct mail program laid out the premises underlying mass mailing techniques, stressed the League's success to date, fielded questions about the inevitable glitches that arise in any mass effort and underscored the readiness of his firm along with the League's Development Committee and staff to be responsive to recommended adaptations, within the limits imposed by the "nature of the beast."
- ...Small Dutch-treat dinners along Washington's restaurant row allowed delegates, national board and staff to talk shop -- or not -- and to get acquainted without an agenda or a timetable.
- ...An audiovisual potpourri at which delegates offered a sampling of League products.
- ...A Council workbook packed with year-end reports from national committees/departments freed up plenary sessions for delegates to talk rather than listen.
- ...There were twin receptions on Tuesday -- one for state presidents, hosted by Ruth Hinerfeld; one for other delegates and visitors, hosted by the national volunteer Lobby Corps and other national board members.
- ...Special guests included past board members Helen Latimer, Mildred Marcy and Regina O'Leary.
- ...The technical assistance offered during "Grants Management" office hours found plenty of takers -- state leaders looking for leads on funding sources, tips on how to fold the operation of a grant into the normal workings of a League. Those involved in the BLM project got together on their own to share progress reports.
- ...The DC League held high the flag for ratification of the DC Amendment with a pre-council workshop and a table of campaign materials.
- ...State League publications and products were on show alongside national publications, for delegates to admire, order and borrow ideas from.

#### Vital Statistics:

In attendance were: 99 delegates from 48 states, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico...14 national board members...13 visitors...6 special guests...68 national staff...15 press.

...Heaven forbid we should mention our 'old girls' network, but we do want to tell you about some interesting relationships between delegates. Massachusetts President Margaret Bliss and Tennessee President Mary Ann Gross are sisters and Connecticut's President-Designate Percy Lee Langstaff is the daughter of Percy Maxim Lee, who was LWVUS president from 1950 to 1958.



May 12, 1981  
Council '81

SPEECH

BY

RUTH J. HINERFELD

PRESIDENT, LWVUS

Everyone here and everyone who is deeply involved with and cares about the League knows that this is a time of challenge. Some of the challenges we face are the old familiar ones of building membership and financial strength and gaining visibility for our issues and our image. Other challenges, which relate to our effectiveness in influencing government policy are new, and derive from the changed political climate.

I'd like to review some of the responses the national board and staff have made to these challenges and outline some of the problems and possibilities yet to be explored.

Two years ago, at the last National Council, I said that in these times, if you don't exist in the media, you don't exist. By that definition, 1980 was a banner year for League existence. But the value of heightened visibility can be measured only by its effects. It's true, as you know, that after the presidential debates, opinion polls revealed that the public accorded the League a high level of name recognition and approval. Many a League member has told me what a newfound joy it was to find that it was no longer necessary to explain "the League of Women WHO?" Our development efforts were well rewarded; and our stock rose among most opinion leaders and public officials. Nevertheless, the pay-off in increased membership that we had hoped for did not materialize; and our only consolation was the fact that our membership drop was relatively small compared to other recent years.

Fame is fleeting. So members of the national board and staff have been putting their heads together to explore options for capitalizing on the publicly perceived strengths of the League in citizen education, voters service and the political process -- finding ready-made opportunities in our intense commitment to action on such issues as the Voting Rights Act and election night projections, and moving ahead with other plans you've heard about including the project to evaluate the past and look to the future of presidential debates.

We're also moving ahead with plans to keep the League in the public eye (that is, on television) by seeking funding for a series of public service announcements. We view that media project not only as a means to a visible end, but as a means for serving an apprenticeship in the state of the electronic art . . . as a step toward the development of future projects and toward what must be a greater role for the League in breaking OUT of print and reaching the public through the electronic media.



Before we start thinking about space age communications, the national board and staff may need to figure out a down-to-earth way of doing a better job of communicating with League members (and I hope you'll help us).

The need for us to do so was brought home to me recently when I addressed a local League and someone asked, "What do you think is the most important activity of the national League?" I didn't get the drift of her question at the time, but from the tone of her voice and the look on her face, I should have figured out that what she really meant was: "What goes on at that national office? What have you done for us lately?" I'm afraid that she is not alone in her "we/they" feeling about the League at the national level. Some of you may encounter that same attitude yourselves in terms of "we, the local League" and "they the state board."

League members who attend national councils and conventions and others who serve on national committees, attend national conferences or training sessions, or have frequent contact with members of the national board and staff realize that the national office has no life of its own, that it is populated by a staff committed to its role of serving the members, state and local Leagues and the national program...while the national board provides leadership and direction to those staff efforts within the policy parameters established by national convention and by less formal directives we receive from Leagues. But there are other members, whose direct contact with the national level of the League is limited to 4 VOTERS and one or two intended--plus, no doubt, some unintended direct mail solicitations a year, who see us as remote, uncommunicative and expensive to maintain. This feeling is somewhat mitigated when members participate in national study or action; but even the national program seems remote to many League leaders, as well as members.

How to bridge this organizational distance is a fitting challenge for an organization whose name is almost synonymous with the term "grassroots."

Perhaps nowhere has the organizational distance between the national board and local Leagues been more evident than in the persistent policy debate about bylaws changes affecting membership recruitment. I doubt that any League would quarrel with the importance of membership growth for political clout, financial security, leadership and institutional survival. Yet, for the past five years or so, the national board and local Leagues have not seen eye to eye on a solution to the problem of declining membership.

The national board, for its part, has attempted to provide how-to assistance in MTS publications, workshops and special projects, like the Big City League's Conference and the Cleveland minority recruitment and leadership development pilot. It has tried to help Leagues come to grips with today's realities in volunteerism--like the working woman, the part-time volunteer and the short-term volunteer. It encouraged Leagues to garner members by taking advantage of League visibility during the presidential debates; and it believes that our program positions and reputation for political effectiveness can and should be used to recruit the many people now seeking organizational channels for their frustrations and concerns with government. The national board has also tried its best to be responsive to complaints about the PMP as a disincentive to increased membership by attempting to develop alternative sources of income. But, in the face of continuing declines in membership, the national board feels that technical assistance to local Leagues and holding down the PMP are not enough. It would like the League to do what other organizations do by recruiting and renewing members directly through centralized, nation-wide direct mail techniques. Many of us are haunted by the number of people we meet who, when asked why they're



not members of the League, respond, "No one ever asked me."

Local Leagues, on the other hand, generally resent and resist what they perceive to be potential usurpation of their autonomy, competition for their members and an uprooting of League tradition. Although they don't say it in so many words, I think that what they may fear most is a threat to the sense of community and face-to-face interaction upon which the League's consensus and its common interests are based. They are afraid that a national membership technology will drain the League of its unique quality as an almost ideal model of a grassroots organization.

The local Leagues have a point. But so does the national board. The workings of the democratic process at the local level are worth preserving...but so is the League.

When you addressed this challenge in your bylaws discussions, did you come up with a solution? Is it possible for the League to marry the democratic ideals of ancient Athens to the membership recruitment technology of the 20th century?

I'll pass lightly over the financial challenges facing the League, since the agenda has afforded several opportunities for dealing with questions of budget and fund raising. But I would like to say again--that I think the national board and staff have been steadfast and earnest, as well as creative, in honoring our commitment to develop new sources of revenue in order to decrease reliance on the PMP. Since we began operating on the present full PMP system in 1978 the percentage of the combined US and EF budgets funded by the PMP has gone from approximately 65 to 56 percent. Returns from our direct mail activities, launched less than two years ago have exceeded expectations and, we hope, will continue to provide us with a growing base of individual donors. We recognize--and have acknowledged--the problems inherent in mass mailings; and we've sought your indulgence in bearing these difficulties and annoyances with grace and stoicism for the sake of long-term benefits to the League as a whole. Having achieved the makings of success with one new source of contributions, the national board was encouraged to make another investment in our fiscal future by approving a three-year plan for initiating a bequests/planned giving program.

In the meantime, of course, we'll need to work harder to maintain and enlarge corporate, union and foundation support in the face of increasing competition from other non-profit organizations hit by the double whammy of reduced government support and increased demands for services no longer being provided by the public sector.

In spite of our increased fund raising potential, the rate of inflation keeps racing fast enough ahead of us to translate a dollar increase in the proposed 1981-82 budget over last year's budget to a real decrease in resources. We've reorganized program departments in a way we think offers genuine advantages for dealing with the issues, but we cannot pretend that less is more or that we will be able to do as much. The challenge of keeping up with inflation is one that has outmatched us. Today, with almost the same office space and with 25 fewer budgeted staff members the combined US and EF budgets are well over a million dollars higher than they were 10 years ago.

The 1981-82 national budget committee met to cope with the effects of inflation on the League, appropriately enough, on November 5th--the day after the nation cast a vote concurring with the proposition that inflation is our number one problem. Thus, it was the first national committee to ask itself how the shift in political winds might affect the League.



Since then, the national board, staff and other national committees have been asking themselves that question, with respect to League program.

One answer came in the realization that every one of our principal action commitments--ERA, DC representation, the Voting Rights Act, the Clean Air Act and school desegregation, as well as the lion's share of our other positions in social policy, natural resources and international relations, is now straining against the headwinds of political sentiment.

Another answer was voiced in our direct and comprehensive statement on the Administration's budget proposals. If you haven't read that statement, I commend it to you as a fitting epilogue to our human resources update and a refresher course on national program positions. It should have served as a refresher course for the members of Congress, as well.

In the absence of any significant alternatives to the Administration's program for healing the nation's economy...and in the presence of the Administration's success in equating that economic program with the national interest, it has come to seem rather unfair, unpatriotic or un-American to question these plans and their chance of success, their intent, and their effects. People seem to have forgotten that political scrutiny, reasoned debate and constructive criticism are, and always have been, vital to American traditions of fairness, patriotism and the national interest. But the League has not! And scrutiny, debate and constructive criticism are what the League must provide.

I'd like to quote what Alan Pifer, head of the Carnegie Corporation, said in a recent speech, because I think it is an apt description of the challenges the League must face and the League must issue. He said: "All is not well in the nation. The President is correct in wanting to lower inflation and to attempt to do so by putting a brake on federal expenditures, if only to help dampen the public's inflationary expectations...But change must be made with great care and deliberation. The national consensus which emerged in the decades of the 60s and 70s as to what constitutes a humane and equitable society represented a great advance in the nation's development. Like all social movements, it had its costs. But we must not let anyone rush us into a hasty endorsement of a new program which could serve to destroy this national consensus on which the hopes of so many hang. The advances were hard and precious and we must not jettison them lightly."

I should probably stop right here; but I can't resist adding a few thoughts about the problematical impacts of being often cast in the role of the loyal opposition in times like these. It will make some Leagues and members uneasy; and, indeed, the national board has already received a few letters from Leagues questioning and protesting our action on the budget. We've even received one letter, addressed to me personally, suggesting that if the National VOTER is going to keep knocking this country, I might feel better off moving to another one. And there will, of course, be those who question not only our patriotism, but our non-partisanship, for, as Marguerite Welles, the League's third president once said, "to be political without being partisan in a country where the two words are synonymous, was always a delicate undertaking."

Nevertheless, this is a time that challenges our political effectiveness and our most fundamental public policy objectives. If our national program means anything to us...if the democratic process means anything to us...and if the integrity of the League means anything to us, we have no choice but to rise to the challenge.



Hous.  
3 - Baytown  
Pasadena  
-SD-

June 1, 1981

The Honorable Jack Fields  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Fields:

Lois Carpenter and I appreciate your taking time to visit with us at the League of Women Voters coffee in the Capitol in May.

I particularly appreciated your taking time to take me through the building and on to the House floor and to point out the unique details which one cannot see from the gallery. It is as awesome to me as it is to you to stand where so much history has been made.

Sincerely,

Diana Clark  
President

DC:jl

bcc: D. Clark  
L. Carpenter  
LWVUS-LAD  
S.O.-  
LWV-Houston  
Pasadena State Unit  
LWV-Baytown



June 1, 1981

The Honorable Lloyd Bentsen  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bentsen:

Lois Carpenter and I appreciated your taking time to visit with us in your office in May.

We also appreciate the position you have taken on issues presently involved in controversy and have told others of like mind of your stands.

We hope that when the Voting Rights Act comes before the whole Senate, you will be able to keep it sensibly strong to protect all minority groups regardless of where they may live.

Sincerely,

Diana Clark  
President

DC:jl

bcc: D. Clark  
L. Carpenter  
LWVUS-LAD  
S.O. —



El Paso  
2- Odessa  
- S.O.

June 1, 1981

The Honorable Richard C. White  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. White:

Lois Carpenter and I appreciated our visit with you in Washington in May.

We were able to get a copy of the "border amendment" to the Clean Air Act during our call at Senator Tower's office. We appreciate your efforts to strengthen this act to cover situations such as exist in El Paso and elsewhere, and hope the rest of the Congress will act in a similar manner.

Sincerely,

Diana Clark  
President

DC:jl

bcc: D. Clark  
L. Carpenter  
LWVUS-LAD  
S.O. ✓  
LWV-El Paso  
LWV-Odessa



APR 2 1981

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League of Women Voters  
of Houston  
1947 West Gray, Suite 202  
Houston, Texas 77019 (713) 529-3171

March 10, 1981

TO: NATIONAL COUNCIL, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES  
FROM: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOUSTON

The League of Women Voters of Houston wishes to bring the following emergency item before National Council. A constitutional amendment outlawing abortion.... the so-called Human Life Amendment.

It is our belief that this issue could be addressed in any one of the following ways:

1. By adopting an emergency study to assess the implications and effects of such an amendment and to judge the appropriateness of the constitution as a vehicle for such legislation.
2. By asking state Leagues to concur with the position of the State of Massachusetts and if a majority do so, that the National League also concur.
4. By adopting a position in opposition to the proposed amendment based on the National Human Rights position "to promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and poverty."

As Impact on Issues - 1980-82 - so succinctly puts it "From its inception the League has worked for equal rights and for social reforms.....the League immediately began an attack on social problems.....discriminatory laws against women."

During the thirties the League worked hard for pioneering social programs including maternal and child health programs. We would be going against tradition if we do not respond to this critical issue.

In the past (three (?) years ago) the League has opposed the cut offs of Medicaid funding for abortions on the basis of our income assistance position and because such cut offs clearly discriminated against economically disadvantaged women.

The issue is not abortion. The issue is discrimination - economic and sexual. The passing of an amendment will not end abortions but will only result in defacto discrimination between rich and poor women in terms of the availability and quality of care. Such a position is fully compatible with our general human resource positions and specifically with the support criteria of the income assistance position providing for family planning and health services. "Facilities and services.. ..should be the same as for the general public."

We urge National Council to assume leadership and to formulate a plan of action that will enable concerned Leagues throughout the nation to respond.

Thank You.

*second copy / mailed*





February, 1981 FEB 24 1981

#### JUSTIFICATION FOR ADOPTING ITEM AT COUNCIL

**EMERGENCY** - Public pressure and political interests should force Congress to address the issue in time to affect the 1984 election. The political parties and candidates for office begin to plan campaigns in 1982 and need to know the ground rules under which they will be campaigning. Congress must allow state legislatures sufficient time to enact legislation to bring their laws into compliance with the new federal requirements.

Many bills have already been introduced to change the primary system. Congress will not act until it has an opportunity to confer with party leaders across the country. This delay will allow League sufficient time to complete a study and reach consensus in winter or spring of 1982. If we wait until the 1982 convention to adopt the item the earliest we would be able to reach consensus would be in 1983 - possibly too late for citizen involvement.

**TIMELY** - It is important for League to act when member and citizen interest is at its highest point. Public attention, member attention and media attention is still focused on last fall's election.

If we delay in undertaking a study of the electoral process many of the concerns Americans have about last fall's presidential election will begin to ebb, and the momentum for change will be lost except for those with vested interests. Changes should be made only after all elements of the process have been thoroughly studied - not on the basis of political expediency.

**EFFECTIVENESS** - For League to be influential in this area it must establish a position before legislation is enacted.

As Leaguers across the country have learned it is important that League be able to initiate input into the drafting of legislation and not be relegated to just reacting to new laws. We can only have impact on changes if we are able to communicate our views early in the legislative process.

**LEADERSHIP** - The public looks to the League for expertise regarding elections and for leadership on this highly partisan issue.

League members have a long standing interest in the election process. We have an obligation to work for our commitment for an "open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive to all citizens."



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League members have a long standing interest in the election process. We have an obligation to work for our commitment for an "open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive to all citizens."



Many citizens believe that restrictions placed on independent candidates infringe on their equal protection rights; a November, 1980 Gallup Poll indicates that 66 percent of the public favor changes in the conduct of political campaigns.

**LEAGUE PRIORITIES** - League is the one citizen interest group that can place the proper priority status on the presidential electoral process.

This subject fits in with the goal expressed in the Winter 1981 Voter, "to focus League energies over the next four years on improving the electoral process and to stimulate and increase voter interest and participation in elections."

**MEMBERSHIP** - This item presents an avenue to possible membership gains because of the large number of people interested in the issue. It also offers an opportunity for League to hold public forums and other public relations projects.

League must address the issue of declining membership and related funding problems. One method of doing so would be to focus on an issue which corresponds with League goals when it is uppermost in the public's mind.

**HEALTH CARE** - We are very much aware of the Health Care Study adopted by the 1980 convention and in no way wish to supplant the wishes of local League members.

The Health Care item was adopted with the proviso that the study be funded through outside sources. To date the LWVUS Board has been unable to secure the necessary funding. It is our contention that should money be raised within the next several months the LWVUS Board could set priorities for studies and delay the Health Care item. We do not believe this would have a deleterious effect on the issue because of the attitude of the Reagan Administration. Should the Administration's views prevail there will not be any federal funds allocated for increased health care services.

**CONCLUSION** - Pressure for changes in our presidential election process come from many sources: the reduction of party influence caused by the direct primary, the increasing numbers of persons identifying themselves as independents, the effect of special interest groups uniting, the incalculable influence of the media on election results. These factors combined with the public's dissatisfaction with the present political system will result in changes in our presidential election system.

We believe the League is uniquely suited to examine these complex political changes and find equitable alternatives. If we wish these alternatives to be part of the new process we must act quickly. We urge you to support our efforts to have this emergency item adopted at Council.



FEB 24 1981



February, 1981

#### EMERGENCY PROGRAM ITEM

ITEM: Study of the Presidential Election Process

SCOPE: 1) Role of citizens, political parties and independent candidates

Focus: Obstacles to full participation in the process, access to the polls, elections on Sunday or a declared legal holiday, media coverage and financing.

2) Cost of presidential campaigns and campaign finance laws

Focus: Location and dates of primaries, number of primaries, length of campaigns, influence of special interest groups and evaluation of campaign finance laws.

3) Effect of media coverage (not-paid political announcements)

Focus: Importance placed on early primary results, early elimination of candidates by media and exit interviews and projections on election day.

#### OUTLOOK FOR WORK

The item would be placed under the Government portfolio using the present Government and Voters Service staff. Research would begin immediately following Council with use made of the voluminous material already prepared by congressional studies, news services, etc. It is hoped that this material could be readily compiled and consequently that the amount of time and expense ordinarily required for a new study would be reduced. Committee Guide and consensus questions should be sent to local Leagues as soon as possible so consensus could be taken in time to allow for congressional action in 1982. The exact time frame is best set by the LWVUS Board.



APR 1 1981

# Council '81

League of Women Voters, 1730 M St., NW, Wash., DC 20036 (202) 296-1770 May 11-14, 1981

March 27, 1981

TO: All League Presidents

THIS IS GOING ON DPM

FROM: The National Board

ABOUT: Five Emergency Program Items Submitted by Leagues for Consideration  
at the May 11-14th 1981 National Council

The proposals were submitted within the deadline stated in Article X, Section 3 of the bylaws, and they are being sent to you within the notification deadline spelled out in the same article.

After carefully considering these proposals, the national board agreed NOT TO RECOMMEND any of them for council adoption. We did so for the same reasons that we did not recommend any new program at Convention 80: The League does not have the resources to take on a new national program. "We" means almost all of us; it certainly means the national board and staff. "Resources" means people and money and time--again, not just at the national level, but throughout the League. It's a question of doing well what we are already committed to doing, with an inflation-strained budget and a declining membership. In the absence of decisions to eliminate existing programs, we could make no other responsible decision.

In addition, our discussion reflected concern for both the letter and the spirit of the program-making power granted to the national council by the bylaws: the word "emergency" in Article X is intended to preserve, except in the rarest circumstances, the members' right to determine national program through their delegates to convention.

The decision did not reflect judgments about the substance of the proposals or about the validity of the concurrence process.

FROM: League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

EMERGENCY ITEM: Handgun Control

COUNCIL ACTION CALLED FOR: Concurrence With the Following Position, Which  
Is a Composite of Illinois, Massachusetts and  
Rhode Island League Positions:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of the private ownership of handguns must be controlled through comprehensive national legislation.

The League supports:

1. a statutory definition of handguns;
2. a ban on the manufacture and importation for private ownership of handguns and their parts;



3. restrictive regulation of the sale, transportation, and transfer of all handguns and ammunition;
4. standardized screening and licensing procedures for handgun owners;
5. registration of all handguns;
6. strict regulation of handgun dealers;
7. mandatory safety and marksmanship training prior to purchase, emphasizing the dangers and responsibilities of handgun ownership;
8. education of the public to the dangers of the handgun.

As an interim step the LWVUS supports legislation at the state level which meets League criteria.

The League will not support state or federal legislation for specific geographic areas only, such as metropolitan or high crime areas.

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FROM: League of Women Voters of Illinois

EMERGENCY ITEM: Presidential Election Process

COUNCIL ACTION CALLED FOR: Adoption of a Study

Scope 1) Role of citizens, political parties and independent candidates

Focus: Obstacles to full participation in the process, access to the polls, elections on Sunday or a declared legal holiday, media coverage and financing.

2) Cost of presidential campaigns and campaign finance laws

Focus: Location and dates of primaries, number of primaries, length of campaigns, influence of special interest groups and evaluation of campaign finance laws.

3) Effect of media coverage (not-paid political announcements)

Focus: Importance placed on early primary results, early elimination of candidates by media and exit interviews and projections on election day

\*\*\*\*\*

FROM: League of Women Voters of Teaneck, New Jersey

EMERGENCY ITEM: Birth Control and Abortion Laws

COUNCIL ACTION CALLED FOR: Concurrence with the Massachusetts League's Position:

Goal: Access to contraceptive information and devices for all Massachusetts citizens who want them, with emphasis on preventive measures to avoid unwanted pregnancies. Abortion, treated as a medical procedure, should be decided upon by a woman and her physician.



THE LEAGUE SUPPORTS: Sex education in the school and community;  
research on birth control methods; wide distribution of information  
about contraception and sterilization; measures to provide family  
planning information, services and devices.

THE LEAGUE OPPOSES: Restrictive birth control laws.

\*\*\*\*\*

FROM: League of Women Voters of Houston

EMERGENCY ITEM: A Constitutional Amendment Outlawing Abortion...the So-Called  
Human Life Amendment

COUNCIL ACTION CALLED FOR: Any of the following:

- 1.) Adoption of a study to assess the implications and effects of such  
an amendment and to judge the appropriateness of the Constitution as  
a vehicle for such legislation:
- 2.) Concurrence by state Leagues with the Massachusetts position (see  
Teaneck proposal above); if a majority concur, then concurrence by the  
national board;
- 3.) Adoption of a position in opposition to the proposed amendment based  
on the national Human Resources position "to promote social justice  
by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination and  
poverty."

\*\*\*\*\*

FROM: League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

EMERGENCY ITEM: Human Life Amendment

COUNCIL ACTION CALLED FOR: Adoption of a study that would "determine the  
goals and effects of such an amendment; whether or not it conflicts with  
other League positions; the appropriateness of the amendment process for  
this goal; and include a comparison to the prohibition amendment."

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Abortion, treated as a medical procedure, should be  
decided upon by a woman and her physician.