



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HOWARD COUNTY (LWVHC)**  
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**POSITIONS 2018 - 2019**

**I. GOVERNMENT**

Support for County Government that is economical, efficient and responsive to the needs of all citizens. (Study, 1963)

**CHARTER PROVISIONS**

Support for:

1. an elected County Executive with a 3 year residency requirement.
2. a 5-member County Council; 1-year county residency requirement with 6 months in the district; at-large selection which best meets the current needs of Howard County; permitting State employees to serve on the Council unless there is a substantial conflict of interest.
3. advisory boards and commissions with appointments made in accordance with the 1968 Charter; boards and commissions meeting at times which permit maximum participation of interested and affected parties
  - a. transparency in the appointment process of boards and commissions through timely and accessible vacancy notices and information about candidates' qualifications. (2011)
  - b. transparency in the operations of boards and commissions through open meetings and readily and publicly available documentation, including meeting notices, agendas, minutes, and decisions/results. (2011)
  - c. regular evaluation of the effectiveness of boards and commissions to assess whether or not they: (2011)
    - i. regularly hold meetings and have a quorum
    - ii. take action which results in a change, activity or improved situation
    - iii. advocate for board functions, funding in board's area of expertise, and, if applicable, General Plan policy change
    - iv. make a list/description of accomplishments readily available
4. a petition and referendum method for altering the Charter to be used only as a last resort. (1966, 1967)

**COUNTY COUNCIL TERMS**

Opposes term limitations for members of the County Council for the following reasons:

1. Elections provide the best means for limiting terms.
2. Limiting terms of office restricts voters' rights and voters' participation.

3. Term limitations do not guarantee good legislation.
4. Council members ineligible for re-election have no incentive to be responsive to the public interest.
5. Term limits could effect an imbalance of power between the Council and the Executive. (1993)

**BUDGET PROVISIONS**

Support for:

1. publicity for all departmental requests and for the budget process. (1972)
2. budget priorities which identify the level of services and consider the needs of a diverse population. (1973)
3. the use of general funds rather than fees for basic county services, such as police, fire protection and ambulance service, trash pick-up and disposal, and recreation facilities. The trend of substituting fees to pay the cost of basic county services in place of general fund revenue from taxation should be discontinued or rolled back. (1998)

**OTHER PROVISIONS**

Support for:

1. maintaining and strengthening inter-departmental and inter-governmental communications, including publication and dispersal of agendas and minutes of public meetings and hearings.
2. a single source of demographic information; the sharing of management tools. (1973)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Support for:

1. economic development activity in Howard County that promotes jobs for residents and ensures a business property tax base to retain and enhance the quality of life. The focus of incentives for businesses must be to ensure jobs for residents, furnish a substantial tax contribution, and provide a net benefit to the county.
2. an Economic Development Authority Board representing a cross section of disciplines, e.g., education, planning, health, transportation and citizens as well as business representation.
3. an Economic Development Plan which outlines specific long range goals and strategies, developed in an open process to reflect citizen opinion with the option of consulting with other jurisdictions and professional experts; the Plan should be reviewed annually; the Plan should be recommended to the County Executive for final adoption by the County Council.

4. a Plan that focuses on ensuring the continued quality of life by coordinating the rate of commercial and industrial growth with infrastructure capacity to absorb that growth. (1997)

Opposition to:

1. the use of business tax credits except in times of a poor economic climate. If tax credits are granted they should not discriminate against small or existing businesses. Tax credits could be offered for the hiring of special populations such as people with disabilities or people on welfare. (1998)

**JURY SELECTION**

Support for:

1. development of policies educating citizens to assume their responsibility of serving on juries.
2. jury service qualifications as contained in the Maryland Annotated Code including:
  - a. U.S. citizenship and residency in county where the court is located.
  - b. minimum age of eighteen.
  - c. ability to read, write, communicate and understand the English language.
  - d. physical and mental competence.
3. the use of a combination of the voter registration list and the Motor Vehicle Administration's (MVA) list of licensed drivers and ID card holders as the source for jury selection
4. expanding citizen participation, willingness to serve, and reducing hardships of services by:
  - a. a three year exemption, once summoned; and a five year exemption for jury trial service.
  - b. the goal of jury service of either one day or one trial.
5. assurance of provisions to accommodate competent disabled citizens so as to enable their opportunity to serve on juries. (1992) (Jury position reviewed 2003)

**ETHICS**

Support for the ethics, conflict of interest and financial disclosure laws and practices in Howard County.

1. Potential appointees to the Ethics Commission should demonstrate an interest and involvement in government and county affairs. The county administration should provide public notice of vacancies with some description of duties and responsibilities. Such notice should be not limited to posting on the county's website and cable TV channel, and sent to local newspapers for publication. (2008)
2. Members of all public boards and commissions which have final or significant influence on policy and legislative decisions should file financial disclosure statements. (2008)
3. The Ethics Commission should assume a proactive role by:
  - a. conducting an information and education program for the general public.
  - b. informing those under its jurisdiction of the provisions of the ethics law and requiring them to conform to it. These include county officials, county employees, members of boards and commissions and

lobbyists as defined by Howard County PUBLIC ETHICS, Subtitle 2, Ethics, Sec. 22.202. Definitions., (j), (1) - (3).

- c. publicizing its meeting(s) and adhering to a scheduled meeting date
- d. issuing an annual report including a list of registered lobbyists.(2008)

**MUNICIPAL INCORPORATION CRITERIA**

Support for using the following criteria to evaluate any proposal for Municipal Incorporation within Howard County.

1. Would a proposed incorporation create enclaves of unincorporated area(s)? If so, what would the legal requirements be to annex these enclaves?
2. Would proposed municipal functions replace services currently provided by the county?
  - a. If so, how would the reduced expenditure for the county government compare with the reduction in revenues for the county?
  - b. If not, what would be the fiscal impact on the county government and on taxpayers both inside and outside the proposed municipality?
  - c. State law provides that Howard County may not impose a tax for any service which a municipality provides, a fact which must be considered in the evaluation of effect on county revenues.
3. Are there identified needs for services which are not currently being provided by the county? if so, can these services be provided by the municipality and are they proposed to be provided?
4. Is there an anticipated duplication of services by the county and the proposed municipality? If so, what is the anticipated increase in total cost to taxpayers?
5. Would municipal government be more responsive to residents?
6. The following factors would be considered in evaluating any incorporation proposal:
  - a. State law provides that only residents or property owners in the area to be incorporated have the right to vote on incorporation, even though incorporation might affect services and tax rates for the entire county.
  - b. Is the possibility of assumption of planning and zoning powers desirable or not?
  - c. Is the power of a municipality to abrogate existing or future county laws desirable?
  - d. A determination should be made as to the comparative ease with which a municipal charter may be amended, with voter approval not being automatically required.

NOTE: If the proposal is to establish Columbia as a municipality, the following additional criteria must apply:

1. With regard to Columbia Association services and facilities:
  - a. What responsibilities of the Columbia Association (CA) are to be replaced by municipal services?
  - b. What Columbia Association (CA) facilities and properties would be assumed by the municipality?

2. Would the projected cost of providing these services and those retained by CA equal or exceed the current cost of services provided by CA?
3. Does the proposed charter include a property tax limit, as is currently in the law for CA and would the law be changed to lower the CA assessment limit?
4. Can the first lien on all Columbia properties be removed?
5. Is there a way to guarantee that CA will be relieved of responsibilities the municipality intends to assume or could assume?
6. What continuing revenue must be generated by the CA lien to pay debt services which cannot or is not proposed to be assumed by the municipality?
7. Would the incorporated municipality include all parcels which pay the Columbia assessment?
8. Examine the current federal income tax law to determine if property taxes imposed by the municipality would be deductible.
9. Incorporation of the Columbia Villages would apply the "one person-one vote" rule to voting for all municipal officials. (1996)

## II. SOCIAL POLICY

### CHILD CARE

Support for Child Care. Basic elements should include support for the well-being, development and safety of all children. The programs should be well-managed, affordable, with trained and well-paid staff, with appropriate staff-to-child ratio, and with creative age-appropriate activities.

Support for:

1. supervised programs for infants through middle school, including special needs children to a later age
2. a full-time County Child Care Coordinator and Child Care Resource Center
3. a representative, county-wide Child Care Advisory Board which would
  - a. work with the County Child-Care Coordinator,
  - b. develop and maintain delivery of quality Child Care services, and
  - c. ensure health and safety of all children in Child care.
4. financing by a combination of public subsidy, business contributions, and parents' ability to pay flexible, year-round programs
5. dedicated space for child-care programs in the schools.
7. publically supported, licensed and accredited child-care programs
8. governmental encouragement of employers to provide on-site child-care through zoning, tax incentives and other means
9. government's setting of an example in its providing of quality child-care for its own employees
10. government support for child care should include
  - a. purchase of Care (POC) subsidies.
  - b. locally funded Working Parents Assisted Programs
  - c. increased individual tax credits for child care and
  - d. training for child-care workers. (2001)

### EDUCATION

Support for:

1. a strong program for teacher development; evaluation and promotion within the system; recruitment of experienced teachers from centers of recognized merit.
2. teacher salary schedules which recognize experience and education with an incentive pay schedule for designated special teaching positions.
3. a stipulated maximum class size, lower at the elementary level and increasing at higher levels.
4. enrichment programs based on individual needs of students.
5. early identification of and improved programs for all children with varied and/or special learning needs, with additional trained personnel as needed; such personnel not to be included in assigning district-wide pupil/teacher ratio.
6. the community school concept, with community use of school facilities the entire year and which is coordinated, staffed, and funded by the County government.
7. increased counseling service in schools, including elementary grades; training for mental health counselors. (1987)
8. Year Round Education (YRE)
  - a. the implementation of a pilot plan in elementary and middle schools for YRE in Howard County.(1995)
  - b. the measurement of the change in academic performance in YRE as reflected by the Maryland School Assessment Tests. (Note: members agree that assessment after a single year may lack substantial validity.) (1995)
  - c. YRE in Howard County if:
    - i. the school population exceeds design capacity by 15% or
    - ii. split shifts in schools become the alternative method of housing students. (1995)
9. an elected Howard County Board of Education with at-large election of its members. (1999)
  - a. Board members should have staggered terms (2001)
  - b. Board members should be residents of the County and registered voters at the time of their election. (2001)

### HOUSING

Support for an adequate housing choice, in a suitable living environment, within the economic reach of persons of all ages. Support for increasing diverse housing types as well as increasing the number and percentage of affordable units, both low-income and moderate-income units, to be distributed throughout the county. (2005) (2018)

Support for:

1. Residential Care facilities, with establishment of County regulations governing their use, to protect the rights of the facilities' residents and the community. (1970, 1971, 1985, 2005, 2018)
2. Assistance in the relocation of low and moderate income persons involuntarily displaced by government action. (2005, 2018)

3. Strategies that increase the number of low-income and moderate-income housing units including:
  - a. Zoning regulations
  - b. Favorable tax treatment for the building and maintaining of affordable housing
  - c. Limited selective use of fee in lieu of alternative compliance
  - d. County financing and construction of housing
  - e. Public financial assistance
  - f. Public and private partnerships to build and manage affordable housing facilities (2005)(2018)
4. A portion of new affordable housing to be reserved for Howard County public employees. (2005)
5. To continue, to enhance, and monitor MIHU (moderate income housing units) rental and purchase assistance and units for those with special needs. (2018)
6. Increasing and monitoring funds to prevent homelessness. (2018)
7. Re-development of existing residential properties without reducing the existing number of moderate and low income housing units. (2018)

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

Support for tax supported public transportation and for the encouragement of alternative to the use of the private automobile. Support for the establishment of a Department of Transportation, a Transportation Authority or an Office of Transportation within the Executive Branch. (April 1995)

1. Financing of public transportation in the county should be by these means:
  - a. federal funds (capital and operating);
  - b. state funds (capital and operating);
  - c. local funds (capital and operating);
  - d. private funds;
  - e. non-profit user fees and fares;
  - f. grants;
  - g. special taxing districts where all residents are taxed, but heavy-user districts are taxed more than non or lower-user districts;
  - h. public/private partnerships.
2. The following factors should drive the expansion of public transportation services in the county:
  - a. population density;
  - b. employment centers;
  - c. coordination with existing transportation service systems
  - d. medical centers;
  - e. senior centers;
  - f. shopping areas;
  - g. educational facilities;
  - h. government centers;
  - i. religious facilities;
  - j. cultural and community events;
  - k. libraries.

### **III. NATURAL RESOURCES**

#### **LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING**

Support for:

1. an effective planning organization, professionally staffed with clear assignments and adequately financed, to meet future needs.
  2. zoning controls to utilize land effectively for the benefit of all. (Study, 1963)
  3. non-residential uses adjacent to residential uses, if carefully regulated to prevent all manner of nuisances, with buffer strips of reasonable size for sufficient screening.
  4. a building code to ensure safe, durable construction, particularly for apartments and attached dwellings; uniform building standards for rental and sale property. (1965)
  5. strong controls on pollution, signs, and clutter.
  6. separate legal counsel, an expert in zoning laws, for the Planning Department and the Planning Board to research and prepare legal documents to ensure that all facts are brought into the record at zoning hearings. (1966)
  7. cycle zoning with an emergency provision whereby the time for submission for zoning petitions is limited.
  8. retention of decision-making powers on zoning by elected officials to maintain accountability to citizens. (1974, 2009)
  9. development and implementation of master plans for unique communities within the county.
  10. A General Plan defined Planned Service Area for public water and sewer service that is only changed outside the General Plan adoption cycle for health and safety reasons. (2007)
  11. Walkable/bikeable communities that encourage and sustain connectiveness, health, safety and convenience. (2007)
  12. Preserving historic sites (2007)
    - a. Incentives for property owners to maintain and restore the historic resource including tax credits; federal, state and local.
    - b. Government to be involved in the preservation of historic sites utilizing tools to provide protection for historic resources such as
      - i. A county historic preservation plan
      - ii. A periodically updated comprehensive inventory of historically significant sites
      - iii. Site specific economic incentives
      - iv. Acquisitions and holding title to historic sites.
      - v. Restoration and resources
      - vi. Inspection of historic inventoried sites to reduce demolition by neglect
- NOTE: No consensus was reached regarding subdivision requirements for site size and setbacks to maintain the context of the historic site.
13. Environmental and sustainable balance in developing property including the protection/restoration of habitat and natural

resources through the use of the following tools: Professional staff with environmental expertise, environmental protection regulations and policies, clear lines of environmental review, green building requirements, on-site inspections pre-, during- and post-construction for environmental compliance. (2007)

14. Creating better government structure to ensure environmental quality with the goals of continuity, review, communication and enforcement. (2007)
15. Growth Management measures that include:
  - a. a growth cap which controls the pace of private development when public services are inadequate.
  - b. an adequate public facilities ordinance which defers new development until essential public facilities, which meet established capacity standards, are available to service the development. Essential facilities are water, sewerage, schools, and roads.
  - c. impact fees as a means of funding some of the capital costs incurred when new development occurs.
  - d. developer-provided sites and/or public facilities which meet county-set standards for acceptability.
  - e. agriculture as a preferred land use in the rural areas of the county. (1991)
  - f. provisions for clustering in rural areas through legal mechanisms that would:
    - i. maintain "remainders" as open land in perpetuity, by such methods as turning over "remainders" to a third party like an environmental trust;
    - ii. require "remainders" to be of reasonable size and quality. (1991)
  - g. clustering in rural areas of Howard County but with no increase in residential densities above existing zoning allowances (1990); a scale of clustering that is consistent with protection of the environment. (1991)
16. a Howard County planning and zoning process that:
  - a. allows sufficient time for all interested parties to consider the issues thoroughly.
  - b. provides appropriate public safeguards in comprehensive and piecemeal zoning cases, such as due process, rules of evidence, and appeal to the courts.
  - c. provides opportunities for public participation through a sufficient number of public notices. (1994)

## RECREATION AND PARKS

Support for:

1. accelerated acquisition of land for recreation and parks to approximate the goal of 35 acres per 1,000 population.
2. programs and facilities accessible to and meeting the needs of a changing and diverse population and that include:
  - a. frequent evaluation of programs,
  - b. ongoing needs assessment,
  - c. active pursuit of community input and participation in planning facilities and programs.
3. a definition of open space, consistent in all county documents, which includes provisions for active recreation, passive recreation, and environmental protection as well as county standards for the acceptability of dedicated open space.
4. cooperation and/or coordination with all other county departments in recognition of their interdependence. (Study 1973, 1974, reaffirmed 1990)

**There is No Local Program Study  
For 2018 - 2019**

### LWV RESOURCES FOR TAKING ACTION

**THE ELECTED.** League members should have a current copy of the pamphlet, *The Elected*, that provides contact information about elected officials at all levels for people of Howard County. You can download a copy at [lwvhowardmd.org](http://lwvhowardmd.org).