

PROGRAM PLANNING 2019-2020

Please bring your Member Handbook and this Fact Sheet to the Meeting!

(If you can't find your handbook or forget to bring it with you, we'll have extra copies available and copies are available in the LWVMC office.)

WHAT IS PROGRAM PLANNING?

Program Planning (PP) meetings are for members to discuss ideas for 2019. Once you join the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC), you are also a member of state (LWVMD), national capital area league (LWVNCA) and the national league (LWVUS). The PP meetings are your opportunities to suggest new studies or changes to our current studies and positions. We use studies to update or revise the positions that allow us to educate, advocate and testify. This year at PP we will review League positions at the LWVMC, LWVMD and LWVNCA levels. Last year we reviewed national (LWVUS) positions.

LWVMC is looking for your ideas for studies and programs. Resource committees sent some suggestions for discussion. New and continuing studies are based on member input and we want suggestions for topics for discussion group meetings, Trending Topics and field trips. Our Trending Topics, held in county libraries from September to May, are chosen for timeliness, their appeal to League members and the community and speakers. The results from PP are used by the LWVMC Board to decide on the program elements to recommend for member adoption at our Annual Meeting in May or to recommend to the national capital area (LWVNCA) and state ((LWVMD) boards.

Definition of Terms:

- *Retain/Keep:* the position should remain as is
- *Edit:* the position needs minor wording changes to improve the clarity of the position
- *Drop:* the position should be deleted because it is no longer relevant or no longer supported
- *Adopt:* a new study should be conducted
- *Re-adopt:* a current study should be continued
- *Informational Update:* a new study is not needed but members should receive information on new developments through discussion group presentations and/or newsletter articles

Evaluation Criteria for New and Continuing Studies:

- Does the League already have positions?
- Do we need to update or revise any positions?
- Is government action needed? Possible? Likely?
- Is the study proposed at the right League level? At what government level should action be taken?
- Is the issue timely? Why? Will League involvement have an impact?
- Are members interested in working on a study? Do we have a leader for the study? Will new members be interested?

LWVMD AND LWNCA PROGRAMS

To update members -- at the LWVUS level, positions are grouped into four categories: *representative government, international relations, natural resources and social policy*. Last year, local Leagues shared information on how their work impacts the Campaign for Making Democracy Work[®] (CMDW). The CMDW continues to work on voting rights, improving elections, campaign finance/money in politics and redistricting. Efforts include: advocating against barriers in the voter registration process (e.g., voter photo ID laws); supporting the Voting Rights Advancement Act; and ensuring compliance with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). LWVUS and LWVMD continue to challenge state laws that enable partisan gerrymandering. This year we will not review LWVUS positions.

PART 1: LWVMD PROGRAM

Positions are adopted after a committee has conducted a study, produced Fact Sheets and members in each of the local leagues have met to come to consensus on the issue. Adopted LWVMD positions are in your Member Handbook on pp. 41-52. Under the Government heading, positions cover administration of justice, election process, firearms control, fiscal policy, local government, redistricting, state constitution and voting rights & election administration. Under the Natural Resources heading, there are positions on coal, hazardous waste management, land use/growth management, solid waste management and transportation. Under the Social Policy heading, there are positions on adult literacy, children's services, domestic violence, drug and controlled substances (abuse, policies and laws in Maryland), drunk driving, education, equality of opportunity (marriage & civil unions), health care appeals and housing. At PP, we will vote to reaffirm the LWVMD positions.

At the LWVMD Convention in June 2017 the following studies were adopted: death with dignity, civic education in schools and what Maryland is doing to take care of our aging population. New studies will be adopted at the 2019 convention. Convention plans are in the works for June 7-9, 2019 (LWVMC is hosting this year!). The Nominating Committee is recruiting LWVMD Board Members for next year.

With local input on legislative priorities, LWVMD will focus on Making Democracy Work[®] (MDW), Social and Economic Justice and Environment. Death with dignity reports are due to LWVMD by February 15, 2019 with Bail/Corrections reports due by March 30, 2019. Reports and positions from two studies, bail reform and death with dignity, will be ready by the June 2019 convention. The goals for the Civic Education study are to present at the fall 2019 workshop and to complete the study by the end of 2019. The hope is to have a position in time for action during the 2020 General Assembly session.

The LWVMD goals for the 2019 General Assembly fall in these categories: Making Democracy Work[®], redistricting reform, improving voter access and security of election processes, campaign finance reform, protecting the environment, mitigating climate change, increasing use of clean renewable energy, ensuring safe water and clean waterways for all, promoting social and economic justice, maintaining the safety net for vulnerable populations, providing adequate and equitable Pre-K-12 public education and providing adequate public transportation.

Previous LWVMD study suggestions from LWVMC members:

How local governments get their power from the state. Each county can then add its own component as to how their local government incorporates these powers and customizes themselves. This study might include incorporated towns and cities.

How a property might be combined into one jurisdiction when it crosses county boundaries as happened in Takoma Park. Or how communities adapt to two counties?

Transportation and implications for public policy. Infrastructure initiatives, including those that have federal support.

Do you have more ideas for LWVMC? Bring them to Program Planning.

PART 2: LWNCA PROGRAM

The LWNCA is an Inter-League Organization (ILO). It is comprised of the District of Columbia League and the Leagues in Maryland and Virginia surrounding the nation's capital. LWNCA positions are in your Member Handbook on pp. 53-57. Positions are on the following topics: airports, beltway safety, comprehensive health planning, controlled substances, D.C. financing, land use/housing, regional governance, transportation and water resources.

Recommended for possible study include:

- Election Security
- Voter Suppression
- Human Trafficking
- Marijuana Use and Regulation
- Transportation

What additional ideas do you have for LWNCA? Bring them to Program Planning.

PART 3: LWVMC PROGRAM

Our LWVMC positions are in your Member Handbook on pp. 24a - 40. We have positions on agricultural policy, budget process, charter and county government, child care, children's services, corrections, education, elderly, election process, fire & rescue services, health care, housing and public accommodations, land use planning, local revenue, police services, and transportation. At PP and the annual meeting, LWVMC members consider studies that may be needed to update positions.

Status of Committees with no studies for 2018-19

Agriculture -- continue to monitor the activities related to the Agriculture Reserve. If there is sufficient interest among members, some follow-up on food insecurity might be appropriate. A number of projects were proposed for future action and some indication of their status and effectiveness could be of interest. No new study is planned.

Census 2020 – new committee formed after the 2018 Annual Meeting. Suggestions: consider the far-reaching implications of accuracy/inaccuracy. Decennial redistricting is based on the decennial Census, as are many federal formula grants to states. Consider efforts for pre-Census boundary determinations. If the Census 2020 is done sloppily, incompletely or with partisan intent, how would Maryland know? Can Maryland audit the US Census to test for accuracy? If Maryland finds that the Census 2020 is inaccurate, what are remedies? How will boundaries affect the community and schools?

Economic Development - accomplishments and changes in policies achieved during 2019. County funding for the various entities involved in economic development should be monitored. No new study is planned.

Education – no new study is planned.

Health and Human Services – Study of Substance Use, Abuse and Treatment will be completed in 2019. No new study is planned.

Housing – no new studies are planned. Committee members are needed.

Natural Resources -- concentrating on learning how solid waste is handled in the county and its municipalities (disposal mechanisms, recycling, what can be sold, etc.). Plan is to write a Fact Sheet on this issue. NR is not proposing any new studies at this time.

Ongoing studies from 2018-19 being proposed for re-adoption for 2019-20:

Study of the effectiveness of the new Montgomery County Public Campaign Finance Law

Study approved at June 2, 2018, LWVMC Annual Meeting but not scheduled to begin until January 2019. Study the effectiveness of the new Montgomery County Public Campaign Finance law that allows candidates for County Executive and County Council for the first time to apply for matching funds provided they have secured a particular amount of contributions on their own. Study whether this provision accomplished the stated objectives of:

- reducing the influence of large contributions from business, political action groups and large organizations
- encouraging greater voter participation in county elections
- Increasing opportunities for more county residents to run for office.

New LWVMC or LWVMD Studies proposed:

Study of the advantages and disadvantages of “All Mail-In Voting” as an election method

MDW proposes a study to examine the potential for “All Mail-In Voting”, also known as vote-by-mail, as an election method in Montgomery County, which would enable all registered voters to receive a ballot by mail and return it by mail rather than going to an in-person voting center. While Maryland allows people to vote by mail via an absentee ballot, this approach would make all mail-in voting the method used by all registered voters. This method of voting is currently used statewide in Oregon, Washington and Colorado, plus 19 other states that use all mail-in voting in selected counties or selected circumstances, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Locally, Rockville City Council voted to move its city elections to a vote-by-mail format beginning with the November 2019 election. We would study and report on how all mail-in voting has been implemented in states that currently employ this election method, how security and fraud concerns are addressed and

assessments of the advantages and disadvantages, including but not limited to, its impact on voter participation and financial considerations. This study could begin as soon as a committee is formed. It would be co-chaired by Linda Kohn and Hannah Baldwin. This study may be more effective as a state study but could start as a LWVMC information study. One question would be whether to pursue implementation statewide.

Funding (underfunding) of Maryland Pension System

A recent study by JPMorgan Chase indicates that Maryland ranks no better than 43rd among the 50 states in terms of meeting its foreseeable pension obligations. The state currently spends 13 percent of its annual revenue to cover its share of unfunded retiree benefits over the next three decades, two percentage points below the 15 percent that JPMorgan Chase considers optimal. To compensate for its past and continuing failures and to fully fund these obligations, Maryland would have to boost that ratio to 20 percent, five points above the 15 percent benchmark. That, in turn, would require a 7 percent increase in taxes, a 7 percent cut in spending, a doubling of employee contributions — or a combination of all three. (Source: Washington Post editorial of Nov. 24, 2018). A study is proposed to better understand this issue and determine whether LMVMD should adopt or update a position on the matter. Needs committee and chair.

Amendment to State Constitution Allowing Citizens Initiatives

The Maryland Constitution does have a provision for citizen-initiated veto referenda by which a group that opposes a law newly passed by the Legislature collects enough signatures to place that new law on a ballot for the voters to either ratify it or reject it. However, the Constitution does not allow citizen initiatives, also called ballot initiatives, by which petitions signed by a certain minimum number of registered voters lead to a public vote on a proposed statute, independent of any prior vote or action by the Legislature. Citizen initiatives are a form of direct democracy that is allowed in 24 states. A study would be performed of these states' experience with citizen initiatives and of the possible paths to an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to allow them. Needs committee and chair.

Ideas suggested for information or updates at Annual Meeting 2018:

Health care, Affordable Care Act, Medicare and Medicaid – Clarify designations of care (e.g., emergency, in-patient, observation, outpatient, Mobile Med), services provided and their use by county residents. Insurance updates, revisions and changes. Needs committee and chair.

Previous Suggestions for Trending Topics and Discussion Groups:

Choose Civility: Possible speaker: Daniel L. Buccino, author of Civility Today. He is a founding member of the Johns Hopkins Civility Initiative and became director in 2014. He also is Clinical Manager of the Johns Hopkins Broadway Center for Addiction and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Contact: Mary Lanigan

Domestic Violence and Safe Passages (for children to go from one parent to the other)

Education: update on what's happening with one of several topics -- early child care and education, overcrowding, what the legislature did with state formulas governing the distribution of state education funding to the counties.

Sexual harassment /abuse

Young voters: increasing voter registration, voting and participation

What is happening with health care and the Affordable Care Act? What about Medicare for all?

Transportation and Traffic: update of the BRT system. Route 29 will open in 2020 and the other routes will have made progress.

Road congestion, BRT, I-270/I-495 toll roads, Purple Line updates, MARC Brunswick expansion and dedicated funding for Metro.

Transportation Planning Board (MWCOG/TPB)

What is a "smart city"? Is Montgomery County moving toward "smart city"? What are hurdles to adoption?

What are the issues around data privacy, cybersecurity/ransom-ware and privatization of public sector?

Juvenile Justice: Findings of the county's "School-to-Prison-Pipeline" report. Access to attorneys trained in juvenile law

Potable Water Security: How do we ensure that we have minimally, sufficient potable water (i.e., water that is safe to drink or to use for food preparation) -- now and into the future?

Redistricting: update on redistricting reform in Maryland based on the developments which occurred during the 2019 Legislative Session of the Maryland General Assembly.

Book discussions at the DG meetings when there is no presentation by a resource committee. The book topic could be tied to our LWVMC positions.

Field trip ideas:

- Dickerson incinerator
- Agricultural Reserve
- Clarksburg correctional facility
- Fire & Rescue (Loretta Mast)
- Underground RR Trail
- Sandy Spring Museum
- Safe Passages Center