



2020 ISSUE PAPER: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Position Statement

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes “that the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing for all persons in the US regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. In order to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families, the LWVUS supports policies and programs designed to prevent or reduce poverty.” We will continue to advocate for legislation and policies to ameliorate the inequities experienced by our most vulnerable populations.

Summary of Issues for the 2020 Legislative Session

How can policy reduce inequality and improve the lives of individuals, children, and families in Washington State? This session, the issue of social and economic justice will focus on the economic well-being, the safety and quality of life, and the fairness of our institutions.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS

Washingtonians continue to struggle to meet basic needs as wages are outpaced by higher costs of education, medical care, housing, childcare, and student debt. We will look for legislation to strengthen labor standards which include promoting and protecting a living wage, strengthening laws against discrimination in hiring, pay and promotion, and providing accessible, affordable, high-quality childcare. The Working Families Tax Rebate HR 1527 would provide an income boost to working people in the form of a tax refund—a meaningful amount to help make ends meet. It’s an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to include immigrants, family caregivers, and young workers without children.

SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The HEAL ACT, EHB 2009 is a tool to identify and address environmental health disparities to help government be more responsive when making decisions which may impact neighborhoods. Where you live should not determine how safe or healthy you are.

We will support HR1783 to create the Washington State Office of Equity, a taskforce to inform all agencies on best practices to promote equitable access to public services.

Strengthening safety will mean keeping a close watch on a newly launched Hate Crimes Advisory Working Group whose goal is to raise awareness of hate crimes and enhance public response. We should be on alert for any outcome resulting in new policy or legislation.

POVERTY PREVENTION

Reforming our regressive tax system so that poor people in Washington are no longer taxed at a rate 6 times more than the richest 1 percent will create a more sustainable source of revenue for our crumbling infrastructure including adequately funding education.

LWVWA will continue to monitor policies that support food assistance grants, temporary assistance for needy families, services for clients with disabilities, housing and essential needs, homelessness programs, state workforce benefits, and family services. And we will defend Public Service Loan Forgiveness which addresses the burden of student debt, and has been denied or delayed to many borrowers due to alleged bureaucratic deceptive practices.

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