

2020 Local Programs

COUNTY GOVERNMENT (May 2005)

Support a county government with all powers not expressly prohibited by the Constitution or by general law. Support efficient and economical county government with competent personnel with clear assignment of responsibilities. Support coordination among the different agencies and levels of government. Support a county government which is responsive to the will of the people. Support County Charter that provides for initiative, recall, and Charter amendments by petition of the people. Support the office of Supervisor of Elections being elected on a nonpartisan basis. (Positions drawn from LWVF and LWVUS positions pertaining to local governments enabled LWV Polk County to support the County Charter that was proposed in 1998 and became operable in January 1999.) The county tax structure should provide for a county budget which is based on adequate, predictable, and equitable funding.

FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION (May 2002)

The League of Women Voters of Polk County will

- Support public education to prevent firearm injuries and deaths.
- Work with professionals to identify persons at risk and develop effective intervention methods.
- Support efforts to reduce injuries and deaths from domestic violence using firearms.
- Support legislation to ensure that in Polk County handguns are sold only to legally qualified buyers and can be traced if used in crime.
- Support law enforcement efforts to prevent and reduce the incidence of firearm violence.
- Support continued research on gun violence issues in Polk County.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES (March 1998)

- Support the availability of adequate emergency services for the citizens of Polk County.
- Support health care for the indigent throughout the county and support of a county initiative toward monitoring and improving their health care.
- Support countywide transportation for accessibility to health care with the locations and available services to be widely publicized where the indigent are found most frequently throughout the county.
- Support preventive care and education as part of the health care program. Support Lakeland Regional Medical Center continuing as a full-service hospital, which includes adequate emergency care for the indigent.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The League of Women Voters of Polk County, under State and National Natural Resource Positions supports:

- Florida growth management laws.
- Acquisition of lands for preservation
- Importance of wetlands
- Policies that promote conservation and availability of fresh water
- Protection of the public health and the environment
- Public participation in decision making.

SCHOOLS (Dec. 1999)

Position in brief: Support a school system that focuses on excellent educational opportunities for all students. The League believes that certain components--competitive salaries, optimal class sizes, qualified staff, well-rounded curriculum, sufficient equipment and supplies, safety provisions, accountability measures, adequate funding--are fundamental and should not be ranked or compromised.

- The League of Women Voters of Polk County supports a public school system that focuses on excellent educational opportunities for all students. The League supports optimal class size and teacher pay at the state average as a minimum.

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·The League believes that every school should have sufficient and qualified teachers and guidance counselors and sufficient educational equipment and supplies including computers and books. Principals should be qualified and kept accountable through performance reviews.

The district should have a district-wide curriculum that assures teachers the freedom to teach creatively and students the opportunity for continuity in their learning. Curriculum review should be ongoing.

·Building and transportation safety should be a priority.

·Principals should maintain a school environment conducive to learning. The district should develop a plan to eliminate portable classrooms.

The League of Women Voters believes that parental involvement is essential to productive learning. The schools should continually, actively, and creatively strive to involve parents in their students' learning. Community partnerships should be actively sought.

·The League believes that outstanding schools in the district should be used as models by which lower performing schools can improve. The district should provide several teacher training days during the year. Mentor programs should be explored for the enhancement of teacher effectiveness.

·The League supports measures to assure accountability with minimal disruption to school programs.

·The League believes that funding should come primarily from a fair and equitable state formula. When any of the basics cannot be funded from state sources, the district must fund these basics and distributed all funds equitably.

·The Polk School District should have a flexible and focused mission statement for establishment of Schools of Choice.

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DISTRICT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS (January 2014)

From the LWV Polk County Local Charter School Study Consensus meeting.

The League of Women Voters of Polk County, in addition to State and National Positions supports:

·The school grade assessed by the State of Florida shall take into consideration the type of student population of each public school including charter schools. Schools with entry-exit policies that dismiss students with low grades, poor FCAT test scores or academic retention at grade level shall be graded on a different scale than schools that do not have such entry-exit policies for student membership at the school.

·All charter school management companies and/or boards shall be required by law to be made up of a majority of people residing in the local (county) district and shall have the same transparency required of other public boards.

·Each district and the charters within that district shall be required by law to meet at least once annually to share successful, innovative programs.

·Federal and Florida state regulations for all public schools shall be as flexible as those for charter schools, providing the same opportunities for creativity and innovation that are currently allowed only in charter schools.

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