



## 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

April 6, 2021



Members, we reprint our Nonpartisan Policy here as a reminder of its importance to who we are as a League.

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## NONPARTISAN POLICY

**Section 1. General statement of nonpartisanship.** The League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County is a nonpartisan organization that promotes political responsibility through informed, active participation of citizens in government and acts on selected public policy issues. The League acts on public policy issues based on positions established through member agreement. The League is considered “nonpartisan” because it does not support or oppose any political party; candidate, whether or not the candidate is under a party designation; or candidate committee. The League’s nonpartisan stance is essential to maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the League and should be guarded carefully. This nonpartisan policy of the League is intended to balance any non-League-related partisan participation of individual members, Board members, and specific Board office holders, with the vigilant maintenance of the League’s nonpartisan position.

**Sec. 2. Definitions.** As used in this policy:

(a) "Candidate" means an individual who:

- (1) Appoints a treasurer or a candidate committee;
- (2) makes a public announcement of intention to seek nomination or election to any elective office;
- (3) makes any expenditure or accepts any contribution for such nomination or election to any elective office; or
- (4) files a declaration or petition to become a candidate for any elective office.

(b) "Candidate committee" means a committee appointed by a candidate to receive contributions and make expenditures for the candidate.

(c) "Contribution" means:

- (1) Any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, gift, loan or payment of money or any other thing of value given to a candidate, candidate committee, party committee or political committee for the express purpose of nominating, electing, or defeating a candidate;

- (2) any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, gift, loan or payment of money or any other thing of value made to expressly advocate the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate;
- (3) the payment, by any person other than a candidate, candidate committee, party committee or political committee, of compensation to an individual for the personal services rendered without charge to or for a candidate's campaign or to or for any such committee;
- (4) the purchase of tickets or admissions to, or advertisements in journals or programs for, a fund-raising event for a candidate; or
- (5) a mailing of materials designed to expressly advocate the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate, which is made and paid for by a party committee with the consent of such candidate.

(d) "League" or "LWVTSC" means the League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County.

(e) "Partisan political activity" means expressly advocating, the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate.

### **Sec. 3. Provisions applicable to all League members.**

(a) The League, by promoting active citizen participation in government and the political process, encourages members to individually support the party and candidates of their choice. However, a League member shall not undertake any activity, directly or indirectly, which may constitute partisan political activity which could be attributed to the League. A League member is expected to keep all League activity and partisan political activity completely separate. For example, a League member shall not:

- (1) Identify as a member of the League when engaged in any partisan political activity;
- (2) solicit contributions for a candidate at any meeting of the League or the Board of Directors, or any event sponsored solely or in part by the League;
- (3) distribute, or cause to be distributed, at any meeting of the League or the Board of Directors, or any event sponsored solely or in part by the League, any document which expressly advocates the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate;
- (4) disseminate digital information expressly advocating the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate in such a way that a viewer or recipient of such information would reasonably understand that the League is advocating the nomination, election, or defeat of such candidate; or
- (5) use the League's name or the League's logo in or as part of an endorsement of, or in opposition to, any candidate.

(b) Partisan political activity of a member of the household of a League member shall be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the League member. Both League members and members of their households must exercise good judgment to avoid the appearance of partisan political activity on the part of the League.

**Sec. 4. Provisions applicable to certain members of the Board.** Pursuant to Section 2 of Article IV of the Bylaws of the League, and in addition to provisions of this policy that apply to all League members, the President of the Board of Directors and any member of the Board filling the functional role of Voter Services Chair, Membership Chair, or Tuesday Topics Coordinator shall not engage in any partisan political activity. To the extent that the provisions of this section conflict with the provisions of section 3, the provisions of this section shall control.

**Sec. 5. Board members; candidacy for, or holding, an elective office.**

(a) A Board member who declares candidacy for or who serves in an elective public office shall resign from the Board. Any public statement regarding the resignation of a Board member who becomes ineligible to serve because of election to public office shall be made by the President, not the resigning member. In any such statement, the President shall avoid the appearance of endorsing or opposing the resigning member's partisan political activities.

(b) Incumbents in elected public office shall not be eligible for nomination, election, or appointment to the Board.

**Sec. 6. Holding a non-elective office.**

(a) A Board member may serve as an appointee on a non-partisan governmental body, at the member's own discretion.

(b) Any Board member who applies for or is appointed to a position on a governmental body that designates seats by political party shall resign from the Board.

(c) If a Board member is appointed to a governmental entity as a representative of LWVTSC, such member must be fully aware of and support League positions as they relate to the governmental body's responsibilities.

**Sec. 7. League Activities.** Elected officials and candidates shall not be introduced or recognized at League meetings or League-sponsored activities unless the elected official is in attendance in an official capacity and at the request of the Board of Directors.

**Sec. 8. Review of Policy.** This policy shall be reviewed, at least biannually, by the Board of Directors to ensure that the policy is adequate to protect the credibility and effectiveness of the League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County.

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**96th Annual Meeting of the  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOPEKA-SHAWNEE COUNTY  
April 6, 2021**

**AGENDA**

**11:30 a.m.**    Logging into Zoom

**12:00 noon**    Call to Order and Opening Comments by the President

Organization of Annual Meeting

- Announcement of Parliamentarian
- Report of attendance by the Secretary; Quorum Present
- Presentation and Adoption of Order of Business

Order of Business:

- I. Minutes of 2020 Annual Meeting, Acceptance of Reading Committee Report
- II. Financial Matters:
  - Presentation of the Audit Committee Report
  - Presentation and Adoption of the Proposed Budget for FY 2021-2022
- III. Amendment of Bylaws Relating to:
  - Article VI Financial Administration
- IV. Nomination and Election of Officers, Directors and Nominating Committee
- V. Reports of Officers and Directors
- VI. Report on State Study on Criminal Justice Reform
- VII. Recognition of Retiring and New Board Members
- VIII. Directions from the membership to the Board of Directors
- IX. Closing Remarks
- X. Announcements

**1:00 p.m.**    Adjournment



## **2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

An Audit Committee comprised of Becky Dickinson, Jim Edwards (Chair), Micheal Roberts and Georgia Sandlin was appointed by LWVTSC President Arnett to review the financial records of the LWVTSC for the period February 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

The financial review undertaken by the Audit Committee allowed each member to focus their attention on three months of financial information. This information included the following:

1. The monthly bank statements to the LWVTSC prepared and approved financial reports;
2. The cleared checks and deposit slips; and
3. The year-end balances of the LWVTSC checking account.

During our review, we, the members of the Audit Committee, found no errors, questionable activities, or abnormalities. We therefore can state that the LWVTSC's financial statements accurately reflect the financial position and results of operations for the twelve-month period ending January 31, 2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

*2020-2021 Audit Committee Members:* Becky Dickinson, Jim Edwards, Micheal Roberts, and Georgia Sandlin

## PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

Fiscal Year beginning April 1, 2021 and ending March 31, 2022

REVENUE	Budgeted 2020-2021	Actual as of 2/28/21	Budgeted 2021-2022
Donations and Grants	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 7,766.58	\$ 1,500.00
Dues and Sustainer Contributions	8,270.00	8,779.03	7,800.00
Tuesday Topics Meals	4,000.00	0.00	1,200.00
Fundraising	1,500.00	0.00	500.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 14,770.00</b>	<b>\$ 16,545.61</b>	<b>\$ 11,000.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES AND TRANSFERS</b>			
State and National Assessments	\$ 6,225.00	\$ 6,275.00	\$ 6,000.00
General Administration and Operations	4,245.00	5,158.43	3,700.00
Tuesday Topics Meals	4,000.00	0.00	1,200.00
Fundraising Expenses	300.00	0.00	100.00
Total Expenses and Transfers	\$ 14,770.00	\$ 11,433.43	\$ 11,000.00
<b>Net Revenue less Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 5,112.18</b>	

## 2021-2022 Budget Narrative

The following table shows the breakdown of our membership by classification and the total amount of dues paid by a member or member unit in the classification. The table also shows the amount paid for the National and State per member payments (PMP); the balance is retained for our use.

<b>Membership Class (No.)</b>	<b>Total Amount of Dues</b>	<b>National PMP</b>	<b>State PMP</b>	<b>Balance for LWVTSC</b>
Individual (58)	\$ 62.00	\$ 32.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Individual Sustainer (25)	\$ 92.00	\$ 32.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 40.00
Household (15)	\$ 101.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 25.00
Household Sustainer (5)	\$ 131.00	\$ 48.00	\$ 28.00	\$ 55.00

We are budgeting total expenditures of \$11,000. After paying the state and national PMP (\$6,000), the balance remaining from our dues and sustainer contributions is \$1,800. To fully-fund the General Administration and Operations portion of the budget, we will need to raise at least \$1,900 through other donations, fundraising, or transfers from our savings.

The Budget Committee supports the proposed amendments to Article VI of the bylaws and recommends that the full membership approve the amendments.

## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYLAWS**

**Explanation:** The proposed amendment to Section 2 of Article VI would clarify language relating to increases in dues. The Board of Directors of the LWVTSC would retain its authority to determine all matters relating to the payment and collection of local dues. Any increase in local dues would continue to be subject to the approval of the membership. Any increase in the amount of state or national dues would be effective without any action of the membership.

The proposed amendment of Section 3 of Article VI would provide that the President of the Board of Directors designate the Chair of the Budget Committee.

**Text of the proposed amendment is on the next page.**

## Text of Proposed Amendment

### ARTICLE VI Financial Administration

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#### Sec. 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the LWVTSC shall commence on the first day of April of each year.

#### Sec. 2. ~~Annual~~ Dues

(a) Except as provided by this section, the Board of Directors shall have the power to determine all matters relating to the payment and collection of local dues.

(b) ~~Subject to the provisions of subsection (c),~~ The amount of ~~the annual~~ local dues shall be determined by the membership at the Annual Meeting in conjunction with the adoption of an adequate budget.

(c) The amount of the ~~annual dues collected for the state and national Leagues dues~~ shall increase automatically by the same amount of ~~, and on the effective date of,~~ any increase in the national and/or state per member payment. Such increase shall be effective without any action of the membership of the LWVTSC. ~~Nothing in this subsection shall preclude the membership from voting to nullify the increase in the amount of dues authorized by this subsection.~~

(d) ~~Subject to the provisions of Article III,~~ Any individual who has been a voting member of the LWVUS for 50 years or more shall be a life member excused from the payment of annual local, state, and national dues.

#### Sec. 3. Budget

The President shall appoint a Budget Committee, and designate the Chairperson of such Committee, to prepare a proposed budget for the ensuing year. The Treasurer shall be a member of the Budget Committee but shall not be eligible to serve as the chairperson of the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee shall submit a proposed budget to the Board of Directors at the regular meeting of the Board held in March of each year, or at a special meeting called for the purpose of approving the budget. The Board shall approve and adopt, or amend and adopt, the proposed budget submitted by the Budget Committee. A copy of the budget, which has been adopted by the Board, shall be provided to the membership at least 10 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

History: Adopted as recompiled April 2017; amendments proposed April 2021

## **2021-2023 SLATE OF OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **Officers**

	<b><u>Term</u></b>
President: Carole Jordan	2021-2023
President-elect: Mary Lou Davis	2021-2023
Vice President: Vicki Buening	2021-2023
Secretary: Mary Torrence	2021-2023

### **Elected Directors**

Mary Galligan	2021-2023
Alan Foster	2021-2023
Glennie Buckley	2021-2023
Jeanne Vawter	2021-2022*

\*Filling an unexpired term.

### **Nominating Committee, Elected Members**

Judy Moler, Chair	2021-2022
Camille Nohe	2021-2022
Judy Seitz	2021-2022

*Submitted by 2020-2021 Nominating Committee*

Gwen Elliott, Chair  
Teresa Stambaugh  
Evelyn Davis  
Judy Moler  
Theresa Kiernan

## **2021-2023 OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, AND OFF-BOARD SUPPORT**

### **Officers**

	<b><u>Term</u></b>
Carole Jordan, President	2021-2023
Mary Lou Davis, President-elect	2021-2023
Vicki Buening, Vice President	2021-2023
Mary Torrence, Secretary	2021-2023
Theresa Kiernan, Treasurer	2020-2022

### **Elected Directors**

Glennie Buckley, Tuesday Topics Facilitator	2021-2023
Allan Foster, Membership	2021-2023
Mary Galligan, Voter Services Co-chair	2021-2023
Ginger Park, Communications Chair	2020-2022
Lana Balka	2020-2022
Jeanne Vawter, Voter Services Co-chair	2021-2022

### **Appointed Directors**

Vicki Arnett, Immediate Past President	2021-2022
Orion Jordan, Advocacy Chair	2021-2022
Micheal Roberts, Assistant Treasurer/Special Projects	2021-2022
Graciella Berumen Community Collaboration/ Washburn University Liaison	2021-2022
Cindy Lash, Member Engagement/Fair Maps Campaign	2021-2022

### **Off-Board Support**

Alta Morris, Tuesday Topics Host  
 Georgia Sandlin, League Studies  
 Dennis Bosley, Criminal Justice and Mental Health

### **2021-2022 Nominating Committee**

Judy Moler, Chair	2021-2022
Camille Nohe	2021-2022
Judy Seitz	2021-2022
Theresa Kiernan*	2021-2022
Orion Jordan*	2021-2022

\*Board of Directors Appointees

# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

## **Purposes and Policy**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

Through its voter services, the League provides nonpartisan information on the structure and functions of government and the political parties and on voting procedures, election issues, and candidates.

## **Principles**

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires governmental bodies protect the citizens' right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.



The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search of solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organizations and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## **Current Studies**

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOPEKA-SHAWNEE COUNTY

There are no studies currently being conducted by the LWVTSC.

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS

Studies, if any are being conducted by the LWVK, may be found at [LWVK.org](http://LWVK.org).

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Studies, if any are being conducted by the LWVUS, may be found at [LWV.org](http://LWV.org).

# LWVTSC PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS

## Child Care

(1968, 1987, 1991, 1995, reviewed 2009, revised 2014)

The LWVTSC supports affordable and quality childcare, which is readily available. The League recognizes that to accomplish these goals, the following provisions are essential:

- To provide availability, we support:
- Childcare and parent education programs which allow teenage parents to remain in school and which also teach them parenting skills;
- The Department of Children and Families or successor agency should provide reimbursement for childcare at a level of actual cost and available to all children;
- Public policy which encourages public-private partnerships and increases the role of business in the productivity and human resources issue; and
- Business and community involvement to make childcare arrangements more adaptable to the needs of the parents.
- To provide for affordability we support the implementation of childcare scholarships, financial supports, and subsidies for low-income families.
- To ensure quality, we support:
- Public policy which increases public and consumer education efforts, such as the development of a brochure and educational meetings in the community to assist parents in evaluating childcare options and in understanding quality standards;
- Stronger support for and financial assistance to the enforcement agencies which are responsible for childcare registration, licensing, and regulations to ensure timely and thorough inspections;
- Innovative childcare, early intervention and prevention programs which assist children who are at risk of being abused and neglected;
- Enhancement of training activities for the daycare providers and childcare staff;
- Quality recognition programs for excellence in day care; and
- Parent education programs.

## **Economic Development**

(2002, reviewed 2009, revised 2014)

The LWVTSC supports well planned, comprehensive economic development for the city and county to grow and prosper as the capital of Kansas. The LWVTSC supports both city and county involvement in adequately funding economic development. For example, "Go Topeka", the group formed to create economic development, should continue to be financially and otherwise supported by the city council and county commission. If necessary, support could include increase in taxes or other sources of revenue.

The LWVTSC recommends development and implementation of a strategic plan providing for:

- Property acquisition and utility installation in areas desirable to existing as well as new businesses, industries, and non-profits, consistent with good zoning concepts;
- Education in the form of training or re-training for employment;
- The goal of well-paying jobs, with priority being given to applications for public funds, which propose payment of above average wages and benefits for those who will be employed because of economic development; and
- Assessment and public reports of results of economic development expenditures.

Annexation should be aggressively pursued by the city, with cooperation of the county commission. Residents of Topeka should urge the state legislature to revise present annexation statutes to make it easier for the city to annex contiguous developed or developing areas.

The LWVTSC supports the active participation of the state in helping its capital city develop economically, which development, in turn, will accrue to the best interests of the state. State revenues for economic development, currently including lottery revenues, should be more generously allocated to Topeka, the capital city.

The LWVTSC reaffirms its position of support for a single metropolitan government in Shawnee County, which should encourage and support economic development.

## **Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO)** (2016)

The LWVTSC supports the economic development entity for Topeka and Shawnee County, currently JEDO, taking the following actions:

- Consider the term “economic development” to mean a sustained community effort to improve both the local economy and the quality of life by building the capacity of Topeka and Shawnee County to adapt to economic change. While economic development involves jobs and income growth, it should also involve sustainable increases in the productivity of individuals, businesses, and resources to increase the overall well-being of residents and maintaining and enhancing the quality of life;
- Ensure that its focus include financial incentives and assistance to smaller start-up businesses, entrepreneurs, and workforce development;
- Ensure that its contractor (as of 2016, Go Topeka) or contractors be separate from the Topeka Chamber of Commerce, as both a perception and credibility issue;
- Hire professionally qualified staff under the direct control of JEDO for purposes of managing current and future economic development contractors and revenues. Additional staff responsibilities should include ensuring that JEDO defines, plans, sets, and evaluates economic development policy for use of the ½ cent sales tax revenue that has been committed for economic development;
- Ensure that current and future economic development contractors produce understandable business plans, financial reports, and budget documents, which meet high standards of transparency and accountability;
- Relate an economic development plan to Topeka’s and Shawnee County’s Land Use and Growth Plan, public transportation, and any future city and/or county growth plan;
- Continue to operate within a structure of openness and transparency to preclude through any conflict of interest or undue influence, whether perceived or actual, between JEDO and its contractor(s);
- Plan for regular, rigorous, and comprehensive performance evaluations for each program category, in terms of goals as opposed to mere activities and workload data. Such evaluations should be linked to items such as unemployment rates, changes in mean family income, population change, commercial building permits issued, changes in property tax base, measures of the “quality” of new jobs, and salary levels of newly created jobs, using Department of Labor data if hard, actual data is unavailable;

- Involve the public in the planning and expenditure of economic development funds through an open and transparent process of committee selection, meetings, and reporting;
- Ensure that the planning, management, expenditure, and evaluation processes concerning the ½ cent sales tax be sufficiently transparent and accountable; and
- Provide rigorous oversight and performance monitoring of the economic development services transferred to any private entity. Such oversight by JEDO should ensure that the private entity is complying with relevant laws and regulations, contract terms and conditions, and high ethical standards, including public disclosure and comment.

### **Local Government Position and Consolidation/Annexation Position**

(Revision 1995) (added Consolidation/Annexation position statements in 2005, reviewed 2009, Rev. 2014, revised 2016)

The LWVTSC supports a strong executive in city government with clear responsibility for appointment and supervision of administrative personnel.

The LWVTSC supports the separation of policy-making procedures from administration. We support district representation in electing council members. More than three council members should be elected with overlapping terms.

The LWVTSC favors the eventual consolidation of city/county government, using the county as a basis for government. In support of future city and county consolidation, the LWVTSC advocates:

- Cooperation and consolidation between city and county departments and agencies whenever possible and practical;
- Consolidation of Topeka Police and Shawnee County Sheriff departments;
- Appointment of a county-wide law enforcement officer with professional qualifications;
- Annexation of land in a timely manner, if such annexation is appropriate under the Land Use Growth and Management Plan;
- Support of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC) or another agency where various units of government may plan and act together; and
- Support of the following statement of the ICC approved in April 2010, to guide the ICC in its mission: “Through the Heartland Visioning process, the Topeka and Shawnee County

community has expressed its desire for local government to work cooperatively and collaboratively, resulting in quality services to citizens and responsible stewardship of public resources. Therefore, the ICC as representatives of the taxing entities in Topeka and Shawnee County will work together to achieve results on strategies within its authority and purview.”

## **Annexation**

(September 2005, Rev. 2009)

Annexation is an essential consideration in the development and implementation of and use, growth management, transportation and economic development plans for Topeka and Shawnee County. Kansas law (K.S.A. 12-520 et seq.) permits the City of Topeka to annex tracts of land through three types of annexation procedures: unilateral, island, and county-approved. The LWVTSC endorses these procedures as stated in current statutes. Because of possible conflicts, the LWVTSC believes that city and county officials should add the following to the annexation procedures:

- All potential stakeholders should share with one another specific information about the proposed tracts of land to be annexed as soon as they are identified, so that the effects of annexation may be considered very early in the negotiation of an annexation agreement. The stakeholders will write and sign an annexation agreement during a unilateral, island and county-approved annexation procedure, particularly during a unilateral procedure.
- The annexation stakeholders should obtain knowledge about and skills in principled negotiation to manage the negotiations among themselves and help reach consensus on the contents of each annexation agreement.
- The annexation stakeholders, if deemed unable to reach an agreement through principled negotiation, should use an outside person(s) who has knowledge, skills, and experience in certified mediation to manage the conflict and achieve a consensus among stakeholders on the contents of each annexation agreement.

This policy position of the LWVTSC on annexation should minimize the time, energy, litigation, and cost of annexation for all stakeholders. This would better enable Topeka and Shawnee County to practice orderly and smart growth.

## **County Government**

(1989, Rev. 1995, 1999, reviewed 2009, Rev. 2014)

The LWVTSC supports:

- County Commissioners spending a greater amount of time on policy matters, including strategic planning, and less on administrative details;
- An appointed County Administrator;
- A three-member full-time Commission, if a County Administrator is appointed and the duties of the Commission become mainly policy-making;
- Election by districts;
- Elimination of elected positions, including the sheriff, with the appointment of a county-wide law enforcement officer with professional qualifications;
- Appointment of advisory groups broadly representative of the community to address specific policy issues;
- A single metropolitan government as a long-term goal, with short-term goals of cooperation and consolidation of city-county government operations where feasible; and
- Support the Inter-Governmental Council with a paid staff.

## **Financing Local Government**

(Update 1983, 1987, Rev. 1995, reviewed 2009)

The LWVTSC supports exploration of additional ways of financing local government, which include, but are not limited to: Contracting for services, sales tax, franchise tax outside the city limits, and increasing user fees.

Real property within the city and county should be assessed on a continuing basis. State and federally funded properties in Topeka and Shawnee County should not be taxed locally, but there should be a user fee charged for police and fire protection. Tax-exempt properties should be encouraged to pay fees in-lieu of taxes for police and fire protection.

Citizen input should be sought in planning the periodic review of priorities through well-publicized hearing prior to budget adoption.

## **Housing**

(1964, 1975, 1987, 1991, Rev. 1995, 1999, Rev. 2009, Rev. 2015)

The LWVTSC supports the following for the City of Topeka:

- Programs and policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every family in our area;
- Enforcement for the housing code and fair housing ordinance;
- Strict enforcement of anti-discrimination laws which provide equal opportunities for purchase or rental of housing and for borrowing money for housing;
- Adequate staff and funds for the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development and the Division of the Environmental Code Compliance to administer and enforce the housing code. This code should contain enforceable standards to protect against neighborhood blight;
- Periodic review of local housing codes, building codes and condemnation procedures for possible reform;
- A combination of approaches to solve the problem of providing affordable housing for low and moderate-income persons. These include, but are not limited to, planning for low-income single adults; public-private partnerships; housing rehabilitation; support services for low-income persons, such as budgeting, childcare, and employment counseling; and
- Close cooperation between the city and the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing to accomplish these goals and to make full use of federal housing programs.

## **Local Land Use, Planning and Zoning**

(1983), (Update 1987, Rev. 1995, 1999, Rev. 2009)

The LWVTSC believes that land must be regarded as a resource of the community to be preserved and protected, as well as a commodity to be bought and sold. Therefore, the LWVTSC believes that the goals of the Topeka and Shawnee County Metropolitan City and County Planning Commissions should be the promotion of a system of long-range planning and implementation that integrates ecological, economic, physical, and social needs, instead of



merely projecting present-into-future growth. The LWVTSC agrees with the current multi-purpose use of the Kansas Expocentre complex.

The LWVTSC believes that a stable core residential area is necessary to the health and growth of Downtown Topeka. Therefore, we support efforts to preserve, renovate, rebuild, and add to core city residential areas.

The LWVTSC supports the preservation of historic sites. Where expansion threatens historic sites, the League supports a careful review conducted by appropriate planning agencies with consideration given to the various economic and historical factors.

The LWVTSC sees the following as seriously affecting land use and development and deserving special consideration by local government and the planning agency agencies:

- School closings;
- Urban sprawl versus compact city development
- Zoning or other ordinances regulating land use;
- Scenic easements;
- Open ordinances;
- Tax increment financing; and
- Transportation planning

### **Shawnee County School Districts**

(Update 1984, Rev. 1987, 1995, reviewed 2009, Rev. 2013)

The LWVTSC supports adequate financing of Shawnee County Public School Districts. The LWVTSC favors an increase of state aid to the local communities to support education and changes in state aid so that urban areas are treated more equitably.

The Boards of Education of each school district should avail themselves of whatever federal aid to education that would align with and provide additional support for established district program goals. The LWVTSC favors an increase in teacher salaries and endorses the principle of equal pay for equal work.

The LWVTSC favors a flexible long-range educational plan for the community. We note the need to provide for equality of opportunity, for a wide diversity of individual needs and for using new education ideas. We endorse the principle of continuing planned improvement of physical facilities of the Shawnee County School Districts to meet the needs of the school population.

The LWVTSC believes that equal education is dependent upon racial and socioeconomic integration. The LWVTSC believes that the following elements are necessary in any plan:

- Citizen involvement in formulation and implementation.
- Inclusion of all schools in one county-wide school district;
- Provision for the enhancement of educational activities and achievements of all students of Shawnee county; and
- Reasonable stability and continuity.

The LWVTSC believes that formal, continuing citizen participation is necessary to maintain a system of equal education that is responsive to the needs of the total community.

### **Solid and Hazardous Waste Management**

(1986, Rev. 1995, 1999, 2011, Rev. 2014)

The LWVTSC supports implementation of K.S.A. 65-3405 requiring Shawnee County to create, review and update a solid waste management plan. We believe that the county should invite and include citizens to participate in the planning process.

As the Shawnee County Health Agency and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment share responsibilities for regulatory functions, sufficient personnel and funds should be provided to those programs.

The LWVTSC believes that waste reductions are essential in the management of solid and hazardous wastes. A separation of recyclables at curbside is advocated for recycling and reuse. Such management options should be considered regularly, as markets and sales become viable. Activities dealing with waste reduction reuse and recycling should be an integral part of a Shawnee County Waste Management Plan as determined by the Board of County Commissioners.

Any processing or disposal facility should be evaluated for its public health, social, environmental, and economic impact on the county by the responsible regulatory agency. Citizen input should be encouraged.

The LWVTSC supports such funding sources as user charges, property taxes, volume-based rates, and grants. The Board of County Commissioners should regulate the rates for collection,

transportation and processing and disposal services to ensure fairness and equity of costs and quality of services for all urban and rural residents and businesses.

The Board of County Commissioners should continue to support in a countywide education program including Keep America Beautiful and Shawnee County Recycling. The Recycling Department should have sufficient personnel and funds to carry out its responsibilities.

## **Public Health Care in Shawnee County**

(1999, reviewed 2009, revised 2016)

At its Annual Meeting in April 2016, the LWVTSC membership voted to delete the former local position, and in its place, adopt the LWVUS Health position to use in advocating for public health issues, which is as follows:

**Goals.** The LWVUS believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents. Other U.S. health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.

**Basic Level of Quality Care.** Every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care, and mental health care. Dental, vision and hearing care also are important but lower in priority. The LWVUS believes that under any system of health care reform, consumers/patients should be permitted to purchase services or insurance coverage beyond the basic level.

**Financing and Administration.** The LWVUS favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums. As the United States moves toward a national health insurance plan, an employer-based system of health care reform that provides universal access is acceptable to the League. The LWVUS supports administration of the U.S. health care system either by a combination of the private and public sectors or by a combination of federal, state and/or regional government agencies.

The LWVUS is opposed to a strictly private market-based model of financing the health care system. The LWVUS also is opposed to the administration of the health care system solely by the private sector or the states.

**Taxes.** The LWVUS supports increased taxes to finance a basic level of health care for all U.S. residents, provided health care reforms contain effective cost control strategies.

**Cost Control.** The LWVUS believes that efficient and economical delivery of care can be enhanced by such cost control methods as:

- The reduction of administrative costs;
- Regional planning for the allocation of personnel, facilities, and equipment;
- The establishment of maximum levels of public reimbursement to providers,
- Malpractice reform;
- The use of managed care;
- Utilization review of treatment;
- Mandatory second opinions before surgery or extensive treatment; and
- Consumer accountability through deductibles and copayments.

**Equity Issues.** The LWVUS believes that health care services could be more equitably distributed by:

- Allocating medical resources to underserved areas;
- Providing for training health care professionals in needed fields of care;
- Standardizing basic levels of service for publicly funded health care programs;
- Requiring insurance plans to use community rating instead of experience rating; and
- Establishing insurance pools for small businesses and organizations.

**Allocation of Resources to Individuals.** The LWVUS believes that the ability of a patient to pay for services should not be a consideration in the allocation of health care resources. Limited resources should be allocated based on the following criteria considered together: the urgency of the medical condition, the life expectancy of the patient, the expected outcome of the treatment, the cost of the procedure, the duration of care, the quality of life of the patient after treatment, and the wishes of the patient and the family.

## **Mental Health Services in Topeka and Shawnee County**

(2008, reviewed 2009, Rev. 2014)

The Local Mental Health Committee affirms the statement of positions forwarded by the State Mental Health Committee adopted by the LWVK on April 28, 2007 and found in the state position under Social Policy.

As it relates to patient care and outcomes, it is felt that the system would benefit from a greater and continued oversight at the local and state level. This oversight could be by an independent group such as the LWVK or LWVTSC. If the oversight function is to be effective, they will need the ability to look at basic reports and records of the local mental health center(s). It seems that the system of care is broken. Providers do not appear to be working to establish a consumer driven, accountable system. It is difficult for patients to negotiate the system.

The LWVTSC supports an established system within the Shawnee County Criminal Justice system designed to address the needs of individuals who have a diagnosable mental illness and who come in contact with the criminal justice system, such as Crises Intervention Teams and Alternative Sentencing Courts.

The Committee believes the mental health system should be consumer driven.

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS (LWVK) POSITIONS**

The LWVK has adopted Public Policy Positions concerning Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy Issues. Please visit the LWVK webpage at [Position Statements | LWV of Kansas \(lwvk.org\)](https://www.lwvk.org/position-statements) for detailed information on these Public Policy Positions.

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES (LWVUS) POSITIONS**

The LWVUS has adopted Public Policy Positions concerning Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy. Please visit the LWVUS webpage at [lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions](https://www.lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions) for detailed information on these Public Policy Positions.

## 2020-2021 BOARD MEMBER REPORTS

### **President: Vicki Arnett**

I want to thank all our members for your patience as we initially struggled to take our programs and work “online” due to Covid. We learned technology which we never thought we would need to know. There was a lot of stumbling around, but WE DID IT!! I believe our relationships with others, the community, and all leaguers are stronger because of our experiences.

Covid ended any face-to-face programming to celebrate the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. I continue to serve as our Topeka representative on the statewide centennial planning committee which will continue to meet. When it is safe to do so, the traveling exhibit will appear at venues once again. When Washburn and other school districts welcome visitors back to campus, we hope to reschedule our Harvard Case Study Method on civic engagement. A league booth has been reserved at the state fair in Hutchinson in Sept. 2021. Our league was able to celebrate the centennial on Aug. 26, 2020 with a car parade through the Central and Chesney Park neighborhoods. The parade was held in partnership with the city, neighborhood improvement associations and the Census Bureau. Thanks to past president Judy Moler whose orange convertible was our lead car. Many thanks to Judy for continuing as an observer at JEDO meetings and continued Board service.

Glennie Buckley has continued to initiate discussions with potential speakers of interest to members and the community for our Tuesday Topics. Covid required us to team up to support virtual Tuesday Topics technology. I want to thank Mary Galligan, Carole Jordan and Lissa Staley for co-hosting and working behind the scenes to make zoom work for us. Lissa helped us protect the security of our zoom link by sending the zoom link to the public who registered through the library website. We have had excellent attendance at our virtual Tues. Topics. In 2021, we can look forward to new opportunities to learn about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Hopefully in the future we will see each other in three dimensions, hug and have lunch during our program. Covid has taught us we may never need to cancel a program due to severe weather. No more snow days.

I continue to have the honor and privilege to coordinate the observer corps. We continue to have 12 observers at 20 public meetings per month. Covid made it possible for our observers to do their tasks in their pajamas from the comfort of home. All while assuring government

transparence during this important time. Frankly, I do not miss fighting the parking for a seat at the Board of County Commissioners meeting. Let me know if you would like to join our work.

Our league continues to provide timely information to the public on the critical issue of redistricting. The program this year took place in Feb. 2021, shortly after the legislature started. Fair and representative government are the core of our work. Thanks to our voter services committee, we also participated, successfully, in vote 411, informing voters about candidates. January 2021 premiered billboards our league successfully sponsored to Beat the Virus.

Due to the way Covid impacted all of us, some changes took place throughout the year to the Board. Carole Jordan stepped in as President-elect. Carole has previously served on the Board and will bring renewed energy to our efforts. Orion Jordan also returned to the Board as advocacy chair.

Dennis Bosley served our League as the representative on the statewide position review of criminal justice. The work of the committee will assist our League in becoming closer allies with communities of color.

Vicki Buening resigned from the Board, as did Chris Huntsman. Vicki Buening has agreed to run for the position of Vice President. Judy Moler will continue to serve our League as Chair of the Nominating Committee. Allan Foster will continue as Membership Chair and to greet new members virtually until we can all meet again. Mary Galligan will continue as a cherished Voter Services Co-chair. Lana Balka also will continue into her second year on the Board.

Ginger Park continued to do an excellent job of communications. Our revamped *Voter* virtual publication looks great thanks to Ginger. Ginger does it all while working full time. Thank you for your service.

Micheal Roberts has continued to guide us through negotiating the 501(c)(3) status reporting efforts. His sense of humor keeps us all going. Micheal has served with Voter Services and has extended our efforts into Pottawatomie County.

Leslie Prentice, Voter Services Co-chair, will be leaving the Board. Her work in the high schools to educate and register young voters has been extraordinary. Leslie took over the work of four previous Voter Service volunteers in the schools. She did this during a time of unexpected upheaval in the school system due to Covid. Leslie was able to keep track of all the classes, when they were online and when they were in person, produce a virtual program in coordination with Mary Galligan, recruit volunteers to assist and deliver the program in all

Shawnee County high schools FOR THE FIRST TIME. Leslie also was the first leaguer to venture out to an activity to do voter registration in person. As Co-chair of our Voter Services Committee, Leslie provided deep insight and collaboration to combat voter misinformation during the election. She even starred in a video to inform new voters about the experience. Although it is disappointing to not have verifiable numbers of registered voters to report, since most voter registration was virtual, we know we touched over 2,000 people with voter information.

I look forward to continued Board service and to a time when we can meet again at the library.

### **Past President: Judy Moler**

As Past President, my role was pretty much, "as assigned by the President". The year was quieted by the presence and limitations of COVID.

I participated in the parade to get people to register to vote. I served on the By Laws Committee and the Nominating Committee. I attended the monthly Zoom Board meetings. I joined in the effort to reach out to members to remind them of the deadline for the payment of dues.

### **President-elect: Carole Jordan**

I rejoined the Board in the fall of 2020 to fill an unexpired term for President-elect. I began attending Board meetings at that time, participated in the March to the Polls door-to-door activities and the car parade. I continued volunteering to maintain our LWVTSC Facebook page and the LWVK Centennial Celebration of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Facebook page. Along with Orion Jordan, I continued to be a liaison to the YWCA's Advocacy Committee.

In December 2020, the Kansas Leadership Center notified KLC Champions of their Kansas Beats the Virus campaign. After visiting with the president, I invited Board members to take part in a facilitated brainstorming session to come up with ways our League could be one of a thousand community organizations across the state creating programs and campaigns to help stop the spread of Coronavirus in Kansas.



Our group decided to fund billboards with basic Coronavirus prevention techniques, and to use our social media to spread the word about preventing the virus. Topeka's League of United Latin American Citizens and NAACP chapters agreed to collaborate with use to spread the word in some underserved communities.

We received a \$3,000 grant and a \$500 stipend from the KLC that allowed us to fund two billboards (one at 27<sup>th</sup> and California and one at 6<sup>th</sup> and Lawrence) for the months of January through March reminding residents that they could Protect Topeka by washing their hands, wearing masks, maintaining social distance, and getting the vaccination when available. Friends of the League Anna and Patrick Woods translated our message into Spanish for the billboard on East 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **Secretary: Mary Torrence**

The Secretary takes the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors, which are emailed to the members of the Board for their review prior to the succeeding meeting of the Board. The Secretary also takes the minutes of the Annual Meeting, which are reviewed by a reading committee appointed by the President and presented as approved by the reading committee, at the next Annual Meeting. The Secretary prepares Board Briefs, which are summaries of the topics discussed and acted upon at each meeting of the Board. The Secretary emails the Board Briefs to the President of the Board and to the Editor of the Voter.

### **Treasurer: Theresa Kiernan**

As Treasurer, I submit written reports of current cash flow, income, and expenditures to the Board of Directors each month and to the membership at the Annual Meeting. Each year, I serve on the Budget Committee and provide financial and other information used by the Committee in preparation of the budget for the ensuing fiscal year. I provide financial information used by the Audit Committee in conducting the annual audit of the finances of the LWVTSC.

I served on the Bylaw Committee and the Nominating Committee. I worked with Mary Galligan in preparing and editing the Annual Meeting Booklet. This year, we drafted Carole Jordan to help with proofing of the Booklet.

The past year presented the LWVTSC with many challenges. We were unable to hold in-person fundraising activities, but members stepped up and made generous donations totaling over \$1,400 in sustainer contributions, gifts, and other donations. The LWVTSC was awarded a grant of \$2,800 from the LWVK as reimbursement of expenses to provide voter services and voter education. Through the efforts of Carole Jordan and Mary Galligan, the LWVTSC also was awarded a grant and stipend by the Kansas Leadership Center totaling \$3,500 for reimbursement of expenses in the #Kansas beats the virus campaign; we are using that money to pay for billboards which encourage vaccination against COVID-19.

A special thanks to Micheal Roberts, Assistant Treasurer, who followed the federal CARES Act and prepared a summary of the tax benefits provided under the act.

### **Membership: Allan Foster**

Every year on January 31st we are required to report our “official” membership numbers to the national League. This year on that date we had 153 members, one more than we had last year. It would not have been surprising to sustain a drop in membership given the severe challenges presented by the pandemic on the economy, on all aspects of community, and even on how we communicate with each other. Instead, our membership is essentially unchanged. This reflects the dedication of our members to the League’s values. Another indication of the quality of those values is the growth in the numbers of our student members—we went from 16 students last year to 29 this year.

Following are our official membership totals by category:

- Individuals - 83
- Households – 20 (40 individuals)
- Students – 29
- Lifetime - 1
- Total – 153

In addition, 26 individuals or households paid an additional \$30 to be Sustaining members, and 20 members made donations of other amounts along with their dues.

When members pay their dues, it includes dues to the National and State Leagues as well as to our local League. The State League increased its dues by a small amount for this year, but our Board voted to absorb that increase and keep the amount the same as last year. The National League is continuing to give students free memberships.

2020 fees were as follows:

- Individuals - \$60
- Individual Sustainers - \$90
- Households - \$100
- Household Sustainers - \$130
- Students – Free

In October, we held a new member orientation by Zoom to give our newer members an opportunity to meet and become acquainted with some of the more long-standing members. In addition, Board members discussed various activities our League undertakes to give the new members an idea of the numerous opportunities to participate.

## **Tuesday Topics: Glennie Buckley**

In 2020, Tuesday Topics included presentations by Jacqui Lightcap, Marty Patterson, Bob Beatty, Michael Smith, Burdett Loomis, Grant Armstrong, Alice Weingartner and Linda Ochs, Gianfranco Pezzino, Diana Carlin, Bill Cochran, and Carol Babcock. Speakers came from the LWV, Topeka activists, the University of Kansas, Emporia State University, Washburn University, the Shawnee County Health Department, the Topeka Police Department, and JUMP.

Presentations included information about issues race, politics, voting laws, health, police, housing, the homeless, and women in politics. The Legislative Forum in December included members of the Topeka City Council and the Shawnee County Board of Commissioners who shared their views on important issues facing Topeka and Shawnee County.

Arranging for monthly speakers involved phone calls and emails, first to get commitments from speakers and then to follow up with reminders prior to each date. The Tuesday Topics

Facilitator sent written thank you notes to each presenter. In the case of the Legislative Forum, thank you notes were sent by email to each Council member and Commissioner. Ideas for speakers were accepted from other Board members as well as general members.

## **Voter Services: Mary Galligan and Leslie Prentice**

2020 was a busy year for Voter Services. We continued to expand voter education services in the public high schools while ramping up community efforts and adding a get-out-the-vote element to complement our traditional registration and voter education activities. We found that with increased effort in both the school and community aspects of Voter Services, the Co-chair arrangement we have is very helpful. We recommend the Board continue this structure for Voter Services leadership.

We reached a milestone when the school program was available to all high school seniors in the County this year. In this program, the high school students get a full class period presentation on voting basics that includes instruction on registering and voting and an opportunity to register. This year the student voter education effort was expanded to Washburn University where several groups of students were trained to conduct voter registration drives and provided with a variety of other voter education information. A particular focus of voter education this year was the process of applying for an advance mail ballot and voting early in person at the Election Office.

To expand the availability of voter registration opportunities throughout the community, Voter Services conducted training for partner organizations and individuals to prepare them to hold their own voter registration drives. Participants in training sessions were from Washburn University, YWCA of NE Kansas, Topeka Shawnee County Library, Moms Demand Action, Indivisible, Omni Circle, and several churches and neighborhood organizations.

The pandemic and the dearth of face-to-face voter education opportunities gave Voter Services an opportunity to increase its technology 'bag of tricks.' Many of the community voter education sessions this year were conducted via Zoom which proved very efficient for League volunteers and for participants. Some of the school presentations were conducted via Zoom and some were recorded giving the teachers maximum flexibility in the classroom. Videos of 'how to register online,' 'how to apply for an advance ballot online,' and 'how to vote early at the Election Office' were recorded and distributed as were voter education slide presentations.

Nearly all hard copy material used for voter education this year included QR codes making it simple for readers with a smart phone or tablet to go directly to informative and useful websites.

The pandemic also caused some disappointments. The League's Centennial presentation of the Harvard-developed case study method of civics/history education by two League-sponsored teachers was postponed in March 2020 and as of this writing in February 2021, has yet to be rescheduled. Along with that disappointment came the reality that our get-out-the-vote effort, March to the Polls, conducted in concert with sister Leagues through the State League and community partners would include little, if any, face-to-face engagement of voters. Our fabulous LWVTSC volunteers, nonetheless, blanketed seven central Topeka precincts door to door with literature, sent postcards, and made phone calls urging residents to register and vote. The targeted precincts have had low voter participation for many years. We were pleased to see that these precincts outperformed the County in terms of increased number of voters in the 2020 election over 2016 by 10 percent.

**Note from Mary:** I close this report with an expression of heartfelt gratitude to Leslie who was a fabulous partner in the challenging days of 2020. Our League owes her a big Thank You for the energy and determination she contributed to Voter Services this year.

### **Assistant Treasurer: Micheal Roberts**

In addition to duties normally associated with my position as assistant treasurer, I participated in many Voter Services events and extended our efforts to register people living in Pottawatomie County. I have encouraged members of the Board to submit records of their volunteer hours serving the LWVTSC. I served as a member of the Budget Committee and the Audit Committee.

### **Communications Chair: Ginger Park**

As Communications Chair, I:

- Redesigned the *Voter* to be an electronic newsletter distributed via MailChimp
- Assembled and edited The Voter monthly
- Updated LWVTSC webpage monthly and as requested by President or Board members

- Coordinated Facebook posts with Communications Committee members Carole Jordan, Mary Galligan and Vicki Buening
- Sent monthly reminders to members the day before Tuesday Topics
- Coordinated posting of recorded Tuesday Topics presentations on the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library's website with librarian and League member Lissa Staley

### **Community Liaison: Orion Jordan**

I rejoined the Board in the fall of 2020 as an appointed Board member. I continued to be a liaison, along with Carole Jordan, to the YWCA Advocacy Committee, and was part of the test group for the YWCA's 21 Day Challenge for March 2021. I began attending League Board meetings in the fall of 2021, participated in March to the Polls activities, and will serve as Advocacy Chair on the 2021 Board. I also was part of the Kansas Beats the Virus team.

# LWVTSC Criminal Justice Study Concurrence Meeting Proceedings

Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 12 Noon

Vicki Arnett, President of LWVTSC, chaired the review and discussion of the proposed LWVK's position on Criminal Justice. Sixteen attended the meeting which began at 12 noon.

President Arnett began the meeting by stating that she had invited Dennis Bosley, representative of the state league's Criminal Justice Committee and Georgia Sandlin, Study Chair, to participate in the meeting.

President Arnett explained that the goal of the Concurrence Meeting was to determine if we concur with the state's position and that local input will be forwarded to the state League Board via these minutes. The position will be voted on at the state convention scheduled for April 24, 2021. Grace Wilson clarified that if the local League made additions, another league had to concur with these additions. President Arnett asked that anyone interested in being a voting delegate at the state convention should contact her.

## **Position Background**

A position statement was approved by the State Council in 1972 at a time of high crime. The aim was to refine the function of the Criminal Justice System and answer the question, "What is the reason for the Criminal Justice System?" Is it set up to punish or are there more valuable options operating outside the system? Should it serve to rehabilitate and reform offenders?

Discussion ensued regarding the meaning of "Restorative Justice." Dennis explained that term came from "Truth and Reconciliation" in South Africa. It serves to find truth and resolve hurt both on the part of the victim and the perpetrator. The Center for Peace and Justice has adopted this approach aimed at restoring a victim to wholeness, seeking forgiveness if possible.

In 1972, there was emphasis on Crime and Punishment and ushered in Mandatory Sentencing leading to mass incarcerations and economics monetization. Some states have eliminated cash bonds and have done quite well, making bonds more reasonable and reducing adverse effects on families and individuals.

## **Public Safety**

Thirty states have positions. The position adopted by Kansas is primarily from California's Commission on Criminal Justice.

Instances shared of persons of color being stopped with no provocation. The extent of this has led to persons no longer desiring to drive including a 16-year-old not wanting to get a driver's license for fear of being stopped. Persons affected including those who have experienced excessive use of force need a resource to go to when instances happen, i.e., a Citizens Review Board and statewide, mandatory use of force reports. The Mainstream Voices of Faith Organization have made recommendations to the Topeka City Council regarding this, and a committee of the Council is reviewing the recommendations.

Discussion included insuring transparency of police practices and training. The training was described by a meeting participant as a "sticky wicket." Cultural Competency Training is a volatile issue. Law enforcement does not appreciate being considered "racist." Still, the number of minority and black persons killed, revealed via videos, running away from police happens all too often. The group concurred that training on implicit and explicit bias is needed, which includes race, ethnicity, religion, gender, trans and gender non-binary.

Mention was made regarding background checks in that information has been forthcoming regarding police departments and military being infiltrated by terrorist affiliated groups. Blue Shield, a local organization formed in reaction to Black Lives Matter, had two members who participated in the January 6<sup>th</sup> siege on the Capital in Washington, D.C. Awareness is a place to start. Suggestion made that we write letters on Criminal Justice matters coming before the State Legislature.

## **Provision of Adequate Resources**

Statement made that fines and fees are debilitating and turn into a whole industry. Effort made to establish bail resources was met with a lost lawsuit. People are currently in jail awaiting trial and due to Covid court dates are delayed. There is bill that would enable postponing timely trials for three years. People currently in jail are "sick and tired."

## **Pre-trial Procedure**

Vicki stated that the voting rights of these incarcerated persons on pre-trial status need to be considered.



Alternatives: On own reconnaissance – seems to be reserved for white incarcerated; and electronic monitoring – costs money.

Eliminate probation fines and fees. Probation fines and fees disproportionately affect poor individuals and people of color, trapping them in cycles of abuse and keeping them under supervision for longer periods of time.

Provide adequate funding for court costs and fees that do not rely on fines and fees charged to defendants.

### **Sentencing**

Mandatory minimums got us into trouble, affecting individuals and families, jobs, etc. Sentencing does not speak to management of sentences. Some released for “good time,” “terminal conditions” and “compassionate” reasons. In the third bullet point, “First time offenders” should be further clarified.

### **Concurrence**

President Vicki Arnett individually polled the meeting participants with this question: “Do You Concur with the proposed LWVK position on Criminal Justice?”

Results: 100% concurrence with 14 voting “yes”.

Meeting concluded at 1:10 p.m.

Meeting Recorder, Lana J. Balka