

## **2021-22 PROGRAM YEAR GOALS – LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY**

### **Goal I: LWVTPC will defend democracy and advocate for equity through voter services.**

#### **Background**

The mission of the League is to empower voters and defend democracy. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the League's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy. LWVTPC will use its voter services activities to assure that marginalized communities in Pierce County are included in democracy.

#### **Relevant League Positions**

- LWVUS Voting Rights, Impact on Issues, p. 23: Voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed.
- LWVUS Apportionment, Impact on Issues, p. 34: Congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population.
- LWVUS Voter Representation/Electoral Systems, Impact on Issues, p. 47: LWVUS promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices.
- LWVUS Citizens' Right to Know/Citizen Participation, Impact on Issues, p. 49: Democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. Governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible
- LWVUS Individual Liberties, Impact on Issues, p. 51: Individual liberties are guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened or abridged.
- Also see LWVWA Program in Action, p. 16, re: Washington state campaign financing, election laws and procedures, election methods, and redistricting and apportionment.

#### **Actions:**

- LWVTPC will utilize voter services such as voter outreach & voter education to strive for equitable impacts in marginalized communities that have suffered historically racist treatment from institutions such as the government, media, and the prison complex systems.
- Through the recruitment and engagement of communities with lower rates of voter engagement, LWVTPC will strive to empower those whose voices have traditionally been left out of policy decisions to select and hold their elected officials accountable for the changes needed to make our Democracy stronger.
- LWVTPC will work to strengthen democracy by being an independent voice for voters as we monitor ballot processing at each local election.
- LWVTPC will further work to strengthen democracy by independently observing and reporting on the functioning of local governmental bodies, noting the frequent absence of mainstream media.

## **Goal II: LWVTPC will advocate for social equity in local environmental policies and regulations.**

### **Background**

Patterns of pollution, unwanted land use, and climate impacts have disproportionately impacted communities of color and low-income communities historically, and continue to do so. Along with facing greater levels of pollution and adverse impacts, these communities are more susceptible to the impacts on their health and well-being due to socio-demographic factors and pre-existing conditions. These patterns have been created by historical racist and later, supposedly “race neutral,” land use and zoning policies that targeted marginalized communities and communities of color for industrial and highway development. State and federal environmental laws and regulations are too broad to address local siting of pollution and climate impacts. Therefore, local policies and regulations must address the disparate and cumulative impacts of pollution and climate to ensure that they do not adversely affect communities of color or low-income communities.

### **Relevant League Positions**

- LWVUS Climate Change and Natural Resources, Impact on Issues, pp. 85-109
- LWVUS Principles of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- LWVWA Washington State and Indian Treaty Rights, Program in Action, p. 19: Action to enhance salmon resources, establish a procedure for retrocession of jurisdiction to the tribes and support tribal land use planning of trust lands.
- LWVWA Climate Change, Program in Action, p. 24: Support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.
- LWVWA Resource Management, Program in Action p. 25 & 30-31: Action to obtain coordinated planning and ensure environmental quality in the use of water, air and land resources.
- LWVWA Waste Management, Program in Action, p. 32: Action for coordinated control and reduction of solid waste. Action to reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated in Washington and action to promote safe management of waste produced, including toxics in the home.
- LWVTPC positions: Biodiversity/Land Use, Parks, and Water Resources (see <http://tacomapiercelwv.org/Our-Positions.html>)

### **Actions**

LWVTPC will advocate for local governments within Pierce County to:

- Identify low-income communities and communities of color (often called ‘environmental justice communities’ in the literature) that have been disproportionately damaged by patterns of pollution, unwanted land use, and impacts from climate change.
- Ban siting of any new polluting facilities and unwanted land use in these communities.
- Incorporated into all municipal and county policies environmental justice goals and policies that emphasize social equity.
- Establish an environmental justice review process that assesses social equity for all development projects.
- Develop proactive plans to promote environmental justice in these environmental justice communities, e.g. comprehensive plans, overlay zones, green zones, parks, and transportation plans.
- Address and mitigate existing sources of pollution, unwanted land use, and climate impacts.
- Enact and enforce health codes that address existing and new sources of pollution and climate change that impact public health.

### **Goal III: LWVTPC will advocate to achieve shelter for all.**

#### **Background**

LWVTPC has engaged in advocating for housing for all since 2016. This has included sponsoring public workshops, participation in the Coalition to End Homelessness, publication of the *Shelter Study*, and making multiple presentations to elected officials. During this period, homelessness has increased rather than decreased and additional action is needed to assure that all people in Pierce County have shelter at a minimum, and housing when possible. LWVTPC is not a service provider. Its most productive role is advocacy with elected officials.

#### **Relevant League Positions**

- LWVUS Meeting Basic Human Needs, Impact on Issues
  - p. 136: Shelter is a basic human right. People experiencing homelessness must be allowed to access or create temporary shelter until they can gain and sustain the adequate and secure housing that should be accessible for all. Every person and family should have decent, safe, and affordable housing.
  - p. 139: One of the goals of social policy in the United States should be to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families and that the most effective social programs are those designed to prevent or reduce poverty. Persons who are unable to work, whose earnings are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available have the right to an income and/or services sufficient to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, and access to health care.
  - p. 137, Living Wage: Meeting Basic Human Needs position includes support for a “living wage”.
- LWVWA Housing, Program in Action, p. 93: All levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage in the low income sector. Identifying housing needs and planning to meet these needs is best done at the local level. The state should set minimum standards for safe and decent housing and provide for their enforcement. Policies should be formulated to allow for maximum use of available federal funding as well as encourage the participation of industry, business, local and nonprofit groups in meeting housing needs. The state government should provide information, assistance and coordination for housing programs at all levels.
- LWVWA Welfare, Program in Action, p. 93: Persons who are unable to work, whose incomes are inadequate, or for whom jobs are not available, should be assured of public assistance and services sufficient to meet their needs for food, shelter and health care.
- LWVTPC Shelter and Affordable Housing, see <http://tacomapiercelvw.org/Our-Positions.html>.

#### **Actions**

- LWVTPC will engage in education about - and advocacy for - policies that prevent homelessness, ameliorate the negative consequences of homelessness, and strengthen housing and shelter resources for low income people in Pierce County.
- LWVTPC will actively support local policies and initiatives that prevent homelessness by promoting living wages and tenants’ rights, reentry planning, creating greater diversity and access to housing opportunities, and zoning reforms.
- LWVTPC will advocate for ameliorating negative consequences of homelessness by provision of access to essential services & basic needs, a coordinated response to extreme weather and environmental threats, adequate outreach teams/services (including trauma, mental health, and substance use disorder services), and clear and accessible information regarding homelessness and related local issues.

- LWVTPC will advocate to strengthen housing and shelter resources for low income people in Pierce County by increasing emergency shelter capacity (including safe lots and urban campgrounds; provision of tenant's services and reentry services; maintaining current low income housing stock and making a major public investment in social housing.