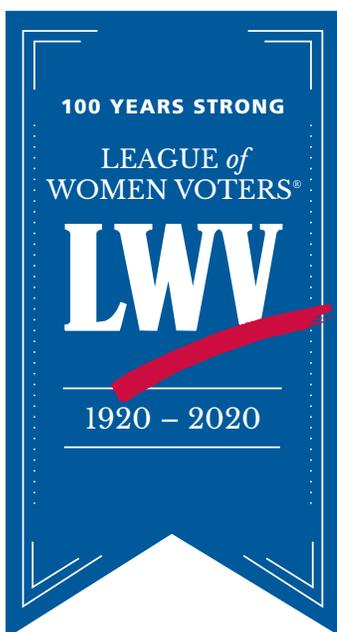


The League of Women Voters THROUGH THE DECADES!

From the spirit of the suffrage movement and the shock of the First World War came a great idea — that a nonpartisan civic organization could provide the education and experience the public needed to assure the success of democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded on that idea.



The 1920's

The League set up classes to train volunteer teachers for citizenship schools. And the League organized institutes to study defects in our system of government, initiated "Know Your Town" surveys, candidate questionnaires and meetings, and nationwide get-out-the-vote campaigns activities. In 1928 the League sponsored "Meet the Candidates," the first national radio broadcast of a candidate forum. Voters service efforts remain a hallmark of the League's services to the electorate today and laid the foundation for the efforts that make up the League's education program

The 1930's

League members worked successfully for enactment of the Social Security and Food and Drug Acts, as well as the TVA. In 1934, when federal and state government agencies were hiring thousands of employees to administer the new social and economic laws, the League launched a nationwide campaign in support of the merit system for selecting government personnel. In those years the League was the only national organization acting consistently for the merit system. And due, at least in part, to League efforts, legislation passed in 1938 and 1940 removed hundreds of federal jobs from the spoils system and placed them under Civil Service.

The 1940's

During the post World War II period, the League helped lead the effort to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. The League was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization (NGO); it still maintains official observer status today and has special consultative status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The League also supported the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as NATO, economic aid to less developed countries and the Marshall Plan.

The 1950's

The witch hunt period of the early fifties inspired the League to undertake a two-year community education program focusing on the individual liberties guaranteed by the Constitution. Next came an evaluation of the federal loyalty/security programs and ultimately a League position that strongly emphasized the protection of individual rights. In 1955 League President Percy Maxim Lee testified before Congress against Senator Joseph McCarthy's abuse of congressional investigative powers. Dating back to a 1920s study of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the League's concern about the depletion and conservation of natural resources was rekindled in the mid-1950s with a study of water resources.

The 1960's

In response to the growing civil rights crisis of the 1960s the League directed its energies to equality of opportunity and built a solid foundation of support for equal access to education, employment and housing. The League also added apportionment to its national program and supported presidential suffrage for the residents of Washington, DC. In 1969, the League was one of the first organizations calling for the United States to normalize relations with China. The League also hosted an exchange with women from the USSR and the OEF Institutes for Latin American women were inaugurated.

The 1970's

In the early 1970s, the League addressed the issue of income assistance and also began its efforts to achieve a national Equal Rights Amendment, an effort which ultimately failed. The League also adopted a position on direct popular election of the President, on Congress, on the UN and on Campaign Finance. And, in 1976, the League sponsored the first televised presidential debates since 1960, resulting in receiving an Emmy award. Closer to home, Indiana was the last state to ratify the ERA. This was a tremendous success with a coalition led by the League of Women Voters of Indiana, Women's Political Caucus, Republican Women, Democratic Women, Church Women United and others. Although ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment fell short for a Constitutional Amendment, this opened the door and launched many efforts to improve rights for women in Indiana and in other states.

The 1980's

The League was in the forefront of the struggle to pass the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982 and contributed significantly to enactment of the historic Tax Reform Act of 1986. It also adopted a position on fiscal policy and one on US Relations with Developing Countries. In the arms control field, LWV pressure helped achieve Senate ratification of the groundbreaking Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 1988. In that same year the League also completed a study of U.S. agricultural policy. And through the Agenda for Security Projects in 1984, 1986 and 1988, the League underwrote some 150 debates focused on national security issues among congressional candidates. The League also sponsored Presidential Debates in 1980 and 1984, but withdrew as a sponsor of General Election debates in 1988. In 1983 the League adopted a position on public policy on reproductive choice.

The 1990's

Members adopted a position on gun control in 1990 and Congress passed reauthorization of the Clean Air Act, capping a ten-year legislative campaign. The League also launched "Take Back the System", a voter campaign to reclaim government and elections and sponsored a Presidential Primary Debate in 1992. In 1993, the League adopted a position on health care and won passage of the National Voter Registration Act, better known as Motor Voter.

The 2000's

In the last years of the decade, the issue for emphasis, *Making Democracy Work*, included increasing voter turnout, campaign finance reform, civic education, diversity of representation, civic participation and voting representation for the residents of the District of Columbia. During that same period LWVEF activities included *Running and Winning*, a program that encouraged young women to consider careers as political leaders, as well as community dialogues on water resources, energy and health care.

2017 and into the future

In everything we take on, "Failure is not an option."