



95th Annual Meeting 2015

Report to the Membership And Workbook

League of Women Voters of the Houston Area

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

95th Annual Meeting
League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Wednesday May 20, 2015

Leonel J. Castillo Community Center
2101 South Street
Houston, Texas 77009
5:30 pm

5:30 pm
Buffet

6:00 pm
Keynote Speaker

Juliet K. Stipeche, Assistant Secretary and Chair, Audit Committee
Houston Independent School District, Board of Education
Annual Meeting follows immediately

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The presence of 24 members will constitute a quorum, enabling us to conduct business at this Annual Meeting (Bylaws, Art. VIII, Sec 3).

Please note that this workbook includes information about programs and outreach activities conducted by our affiliated organization, the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund.

League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
95th Annual Meeting
Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Order of Business

Call to Order	Aimee Mobley Turney
Opening Ceremony (50 year member recognition)	Sharon Cunningham
Consent Items	Aimee Mobley Turney
Appointment of Parliamentarian	
Appointment of Timekeeper	
Appointment of Committee to Approve Minutes	
Appointment of the Sergeant at Arms	
Adoption of Order of Business	
Adoption of Rules	
Treasurer's Report	Leslie Taylor
Report of the Budget Committee	Sharon Cunningham
Adoption of the Budget, 2015-2016	
Awards and Appreciations	
Report of the Awards Committee	Linda Cohn
President's Remarks	Aimee Mobley Turney
Report of the Nominating Committee	Nancy Parra
Election of Officers, 2015 - 2016	
Old Business	Aimee Mobley Turney
New Business	Aimee Mobley Turney
Good of the Order (I wish the Board would...)	Aimee Mobley Turney
Announcements	
Adjourn	

**The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Minutes of the 94th Meeting on May 22, 2014
Montrose Counseling Center
401 Branard, Houston 77005**

*** The Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area was called to order at 7:00 pm by President Carolyn Mata.**

***Procedural Announcements:**

Procedural Announcements:

Phyllis Frye shall serve as Parliamentarian

Ann Herbage shall serve as Timekeeper

Tom Berg shall review and approve the minutes of this meeting

The annual meeting shall proceed in accordance with the rules published in the Annual Meeting Workbook and Report to Members.

Januari Leo moved to amend the agenda to insert a discussion of LWFVHA's approving the Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) Motion carried.

***The Treasurer's Report for LWFVHA and Ed Fund from June 1, through May 14, 2014 were distributed and accepted.**

***Vice-President Januari Leo Local Issues: Study and Advocacy**

There were two recommended studies for 2014-2016L

Study of charter Schools in HISD – one year study

It was moved and seconded to approve the study. After discussion, a vote was taken. Motion failed.

It was then moved and seconded to approve the study of hurricane preparedness for the Houston/Harris County Region – a two-year study. After considerable discussion, it was voted on. The motion failed.

After further discussion Januari Leo moved the membership to support the HERO. Motion was second and approved unanimously.

*** Vice President Katie Molina Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015**

It was explained that the budget was based on actual income and expenses from last year. Any new projects will require new funding through grants or other funding.

Motion was made to accept the LWFVHA budget. It was approved by the general membership.

*** Sharon Cunningham Awards and Appreciations**

The Committee consisted of Ann Herbage, Tom Berg, and Sherry Walshak.

Special Achievement Awards were presented to the following individuals:

Penny Milbouer
Barbara Swartz
Judy Hollinger
Leslie Taylor
Mary Titus
Bennie Gutierrez
Ryan Leach

No Helen Hunter Award was presented this year.

*** Mary Lee Burris presented the Report of the Nominating Committee: Linda Cohn moved that the report be accepted. Motion carried.**

President: Carolyn Mata (2014-2015)
Executive Vice President: Aimee Mobley Turney (2014-2015)
VP Civic Engagement Claudia Ortega Hogue (2014-2015)
VP Issues, Study and Action Katie Molina (2014-2016)
VP Membership Sherry Walshak (2014-2016)
Secretary Mary Ellen Whitworth (2014-2016)
Treasurer Leslie Taylor (2014-2016)
Director Tom Berg (2014-2015 unexpired term)
Director Danita Gallegos (2014-2016)
Director Januari Leo (2014-2016)
Director Lindsay Munoz (2014-2016)
Director Ryan Leach (2014-2016)
Director Annie Benifield (2013-2015)
Director Reynaldo Guerra (2014-2016)
Director Beni Gutierrez (2014-2015 unexpired term)

Nominating Committee

Chair, Nancy Parra
Member, Ann Herbage
Member, Linda Cohn
Member TBA (2 board members)

Aimee Mobley Turney announced that the LWV State Convention would be held in Houston in 2016 chaired by Judy Hollinger.

-minutes recorded by Tom Berg and approved by Marcia Miqueloto

Proposed Rules for the Annual Meeting

Composition

Admission to the Annual Meeting is open to voting members, associate members and guests. Only voting members may vote.

Quorum (ART VIII, SEC 3, LWV-HA BYLAWS)

Twenty members must be present in order to conduct business at this meeting.

Debate

Only voting members have the privilege of the floor. No person may speak twice until all who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so. Each speaker shall identify herself or himself. Each debate speaker shall be limited to one minute, plus the time required to complete a sentence.

Closing Debate

A motion to halt debate is stated as "I move the previous question." This motion, which must be seconded, is not debatable and must be put to an immediate vote. A two-thirds vote is necessary to adopt this motion. If adopted, debate is immediately ended, and the motion under debate is voted upon.

Voting Procedures

A majority of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election of officers. Nominations for officers may be made from the floor by any voting member at the appropriate time, provided the consent of the nominee has been secured.

Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting, provided the amendments have been submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance.

Annual dues

Annual dues are determined by a three-fifths vote of those present and voting.

Budget

Adoption of the budget requires a majority vote.

Governing Rules

The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" shall govern in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws.

Report of the President

Aimee Mobley Turney

Welcome to the 95th Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area.

Carolyn Mata performed yeoman's work in her 18 months of office as President by laying the groundwork to establish a technology infrastructure that will sustain us for several years. She should be commended for her thoughtful and deliberate actions. She will be in attendance at the annual meeting and I encourage you to speak directly to her before or after the meeting.

The Executive Vice President is charged with ascending to the position of President should the President not be able to complete their term. I understood this when I accepted the position yet never expected this to occur. The past six months have been challenging as I have balanced League leadership with other commitments that have come to a close. There is much that I have learned since assuming the role of President and much more to be learned. I feel grateful that with the encouragement of past presidents and peers with leadership experience that I have become more confident with leadership and delegation.

Our several Committees and League Leaders were quick to step up and keep the League on course after President Mata's departure. They faced organizational challenges with poise and grace. Their reports display their ability to multi-task when necessary and stay on track with their own responsibilities.

I feel excited and confident about serving you for the next two years. Our board of directors and officers are qualified to guide the League in a new and exciting direction, as we look to the future and the 2016 Presidential Election.

Reports on Special Projects

Rising Stars – Chairs: Reynaldo Guerra, Lindsay Taylor Munoz, and Ne'Cauje Turner

The League of Women Voters Rising Stars event on Thursday, October 2, 2014 at Hughes Hangar was definitely a success. The event paid homage to Women's Equality Day and the trailblazing women that came before us, as well as highlighted the young professionals who are making a difference in the Greater Houston community through their civic involvement and leadership. These twenty-five "Rising Stars" were recognized amid a packed venue of roughly 175 people, and the Carrie Chapman Catt award was presented to Chonya Johnson. The 2014 event increased its fundraising revenue over 2013 threefold, and provided valuable exposure of the League and its merits to a new generation of civic leaders.

Repast With Political Pioneers – Chair: Danita Gallegos

The 14th annual Repast Luncheon honoring Sissy Farenthold and Carole Keeton was to be held on May 29th AT the Houston Racquet Club. The luncheon date has been moved to August 26th at the Houston Racquet Club because one of the honorees had an unforeseen conflict and will not be available again until mid summer.

Reports of the Vice Presidents and Their Committees

Vice President for Membership Affairs – Sherry Walshak

Objective:

For FY2014, the objectives of the Membership committee was to:

- Engage existing members through regular communications (e-Voter) and orientation meetings;
- Support the Unit Meetings; and
- Solicit new members.

Results:

- e-Voter: monthly e-newsletters were developed and distributed to our members and other names in our database. Printed newsletters were mailed to those in our membership who do not have an email address.
- New member orientation meetings: we convened new member orientations at a member's home, to get to know them, learn of their interests and engage for volunteer opportunities.
- Unit Meetings: we secured content from programs (where available) and developed key topics for use in Unit Meetings. This involved securing a 'subject matter expert' and arranging briefings with the Unit Meeting leaders prior to the Unit Meetings. Mary Lee Burrus served as lead to this team.
- Recruiting new members:
 - o We supported local festivals and programs by having a membership table on-site with brochures and voter registration cards. Examples include:
 - Lights in the Heights
 - Film openings
 - LWV-HA Programs (e.g. Low Voter Turn-Out).
 - LWV-HA Signature events (e.g. Repast)
 - o We completed several membership email/letter campaigns to:
 - All elected officials
 - Rising Stars (all classes)
 - Former members (their membership has lapsed)
 - Members whose membership is about to lapse
- We started 2014 with 233 members and ended the year with 230 members.

Next Steps - For Next Year

Premise:

Getting new members and managing existing members is the lifeblood of any organization. Membership is a shared responsibility for anyone who is a member, and particularly for anyone serving on the Board of Directors.

Board Responsibility:

- Promote the LWV wherever possible, including to other organizations that each Board member belongs. Requested actions:
 - o Get on the agenda of these other organizations and do a brief elevator pitch for why their members should consider joining the LWV-HA, especially highlighting upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities.
 - o Board members should report back once per quarter what they have done to promote membership in these organizations.

Membership Committee – Resource Needs

- **Unit Meetings Leader**
- **eVoter Newsletter Editor**
- **Member recruitment Leader**
- **Social Hour Leader**

Membership Committee - Responsibilities:Manage existing members:

- Regular communications via eVoter (e.g. compile monthly newsletters and distribute)
 - o Propose a social media plan to get members to tweet about upcoming programs and volunteer needs.
- New member orientation – support these meetings and engage for possible volunteer needs.
- Quarterly Social Hour at different locations – inviting members to bring a friend (non-members).
 - o Post photos on social media channels (e.g. Facebook)
- Special outreach to invite members to help staff membership tables at festivals and programs.
- Support Unit Meetings; secure content from programs (where available) and develop key topics and discussion questions for use in Unit Meetings. This involves securing a ‘subject matter expert’ and arranging briefings with the Unit Meeting leaders prior to the Unit Meetings.

Recruiting new members:

- o Target organizations to engage to invite their membership to join LWV-HA.
 - Need to develop a list of these target organizations and a roster of volunteers willing to engage them and report back.
- o Social Hours at various locations around Houston (quarterly) – invite members to bring a friend (non-member).
 - Solicit Rising Stars to attend and support
- o Support local festivals and LWV-HA programs by having a membership table on-site with brochures and voter registration cards.
 - Need to develop a calendar of local events and organizers to reserve and staff membership tables on-site.
 - Create a social media plan to promote LWV being at the festival
- o Conduct annual membership email/letter campaigns to:
 - All elected officials
 - Rising Stars (all classes)
 - Former members (their membership has lapsed)
 - Members whose membership is about to lapse

- Recently retired people (how to get this list?)
- Students turning 18 – getting the right to vote (how to get this list?)

Vice President for Programs and Issues – Katie Molina

Educational Programs

Many topics were considered for public awareness and community education this coming year, based on timeliness in the community and level of interest to the membership.

Payday/Alternative Lending – Program #1 on Wednesday, August 27, 2014

We hosted an audience of about 70 at the Hope and Healing Center, in partnership with Dress For Success Houston, which included a screening of the documentary “Spent.” This film chronicled the credit problems and crushing debt of diverse individuals, caught between the financial vehicles available today. We recruited an expert panel with representatives from American Express, Texas Appleseed, the City of Houston Permitting Division and Bank On Houston, who conducted a lively discussion of our recent City ordinance, legislative concerns in our state, and assistance programs available to our community. Promotion of this event was done via E-Voter, email invitations, website, Facebook, press releases and a talk show on our local KPRC-Channel 2. A detailed brief was provided to our Units for discussion thereafter, and was also posted on our website for public view.

Middle Skills/Upward Education – Program #2 on Tuesday, October 7, 2014

We hosted a disappointingly small audience at the Hope and Healing Center to share information about this new focus of the Greater Houston Partnership and our expanding business community. Joining us were experts and industry pioneers, including Peter Beard, Senior VP of Regional Workforce Development with the Greater Houston Partnership, Michelle Paul, Program Director of Capital Idea Houston, Alberto Uribe, Associate Executive Director of SER-Jobs for Progress, and Dana Tabor, Wunsche High School. They presented information on our changing workforce and its demographics, new opportunities for career advancement for our lowest earners, the need in our local economy for skilled workers, new programs to train workers to fill our needs, and the new Texas House Bill #5 that proscribes new curricula and study for our high school students to choose either skilled work or college paths. Although this issue is of rising concern in our business and educational communities locally, our LWV membership was generally not responsive to this issue. Promotion of this event was done via E-Voter, email invitations, Facebook and our website. A detailed brief was provided to our Units for further discussion, and was posted on the website.

Low Voter Turnout – Program #3 on Thursday, February 26, 2015

We hosted an audience of about 50 students, educators, members and some general public, at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church’s Community Center to discuss the demographics of voter participation in the Houston area. Joining us were Mark P. Jones - James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Fellow in Political Science, Richard Murray - Director of Surveying, Center for Public Policy, University of Houston, Mustafa Tameez - Managing Director of Outreach Strategists, a bipartisan public affairs firm, and Hector DeLeon - Director of Communications and Voter Outreach of the Harris County. We also welcomed Renee Cross - Associate Director, Hobby Center for Public Policy as our moderator. Our goal was to investigate likely causes of

why registered voters do not show up at the polls, and to discuss ways to encourage higher participation. In this interest, our plan was that this analysis of the problem was to be a first step in a series of meetings to take place over the coming year, in order to make an impact by the 2016 election season. Dates for the subsequent meetings have not been set. Promotion was done via E-Voter, email invitation, Facebook and the website. A detailed brief is still to come.

Committees

Natural Resource Committee

The Natural Resources Committee met in the fall of 2014 for a special private field trip down Buffalo Bayou to investigate the issue of plastic pollution. Committee members also monitored and participated in discussions about the City of Houston's proposed One Bin recycling program, which was ultimately defeated in early 2015. Although these and other issues were considered for an educational program in the spring of 2015, a natural resources program has not yet been agreed upon or scheduled. A chair is also needed for this committee.

Social/Education Committee

This committee was initiated but is now inactive. Originally, there was an interest in HB#5, workforce development, charter schools, early childhood education, parenting skills and training, child abuse and CPS reform. We held programs on payday lending and middle skills education, but were unable to recruit enough members to sustain the committee.

Government/Legislative Committee

No formal committee formed as yet. Some interest was expressed for discussions of term limits, city pensions, HOAs, gun control measures, immigration, property tax reform, urban planning imperatives (especially in times of rapid growth), low voter turnout strategies, and info on new local efforts to facilitate acquisition of voter i.d.s. We held an initial program on low voter turnout, but need members to continue pursuit of these issues.

City/County Action Team

This group was created for advocacy efforts.

Positions

A preliminary review and update of our local positions was begun, but this effort still needs volunteers to participate.

Vice President for Civic Engagement – Claudia E. Ortega-Hogue



Many thanks to the Chairpersons whose hard work and dedication made the 2014-2015 League year an excellent one for Voter Service and Community Outreach. These activities would not have been possible without all of the volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talents—there were so many that any attempt to list them all would be impossible. I do want to thank each and every one who helped! I hope each of you knows how very much you are appreciated!

Chairs of Civic Engagement Committees were:

- *Voters Guide*— Jacqueline Alfred
- Voter Registration –
 - a) Naturalization Ceremonies— Mary Titus, Beni Gutierrez, Judy Hollinger
 - b) Community Events & High Schools — Beni Gutierrez, Committee
 - c) Deputy Voter Registrar (DVR) Trainings— Mary Titus, Beni Gutierrez
 - d) Social Media – Linda Cohn, Tom Berg, Sarah Schimmer
- Debates and Forums—Aimee Mobley Turney
- Speakers Bureau—Committee
- Television Programs—Aimee Mobley Turney, Linda Cohn
- Hispanic Community Outreach —Tom Berg
 - a) Citizenship & Immigration Forums
- Election Voter Projects with KPRC
 - a) Election Day Phone Bank—Judy Hollinger, Beni Gutierrez
 - b) Election Twitter Outreach—Linda Cohn, Tom Berg
 - c) Conversations with Candidates Program—Aimee Mobley Turney

Voters Guide

- 2014 November General Election – 22,000 English-version Voters Guides were printed and 13,000 Spanish-version were printed.
- We Thank Mi Familia Vota, a 501c3 organization dedicated to voter education, for providing translation services and distribution assistance for the Spanish language Voters Guide.
- In addition to printed Voters Guides, for both elections we offered both the English and Spanish versions on-line.

Directory of Elected Officials (Voters Key)

- 2014 Updated and published electronically on the web.

Handy Dandy Guide to the Election

- The Handy Dandy Guides to the November 2014 General Election were published and distributed electronically in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. They were published as print trifold brochures (for brick-and-mortar distribution) in English and Spanish.

Naturalization Ceremonies



Voter Registration



Our biggest success story in registering citizens to vote continues to be our outreach at the monthly Naturalization Ceremonies. From January 2014 through March 2015, with small flags waving and much applause, League volunteers witnessed 23,474 new citizens take the Oath of Citizenship, and accepted voter registration applications from 17,514 of our new follow citizens—a robust 75 percent.

Our thanks to our student volunteers, our sister civic organizations, independent voter registrars and the staff from the County Tax Assessor Collector's Office for their assistance in assuring the success of this project.

2014 Voter Registration at Houston Area Naturalization Ceremonies

DATE	Number of Petitioners	Number of New Citizens Serviced on the Spot	Rate of Response
1/15/14	1,087	910	84%
2/20/14	1,614	990	61%
3/26/14	1,577	1,161	74%
4/23/14	1,256	925	74%

5/14/14	1,115	827	74%
6/25/14	1,501	958	64%
7/23/14	1,182	863	73%
8/27/14	1,667	1,165	70%
9/24/14	1,253	1,103	88%
10/22/14	1,466	1,263	86%
11/19/14	1,471	1,089	74%
12/17/14	1,740	1,358	78%
TOTAL:	16,929	12,612	74%

2015 Voter Registration at Houston Area Naturalization Ceremonies

DATE	Number of Petitioners	Voter Registrations on the Spot	Rate of Response
01/28/2015	2,065	1,508	73%
02/25/2015	2,312	1,942	84%
03/25/2015	2,168	1,452	67%
TOTAL:	6,545	4,902	75%

Voter Registration Community Events

The League continued its efforts to register new voters at smaller venues and events in the Greater Houston area. We provided services in community events sponsored by a wide variety of organizations, high schools, colleges and universities.

Many thanks to all who worked to assist aspiring voters complete applications at community events. Our ability to respond to requests for Voter Registration services throughout the community is limited only by the number of volunteers who are available to staff events. If you are not a certified Voter Registrar, please consider taking the training and helping provide this service in the future.

Deputy Voter Registrar Trainings have been organized on behalf of the League Of Women Voters. These trainings have taken place at University of Houston Downtown to deputized students and community centers. Over a hundred of volunteers have been deputized and are ready to assist on voter registration.

National Voter Registration Day

On National Voter Registration Day, September 23rd, 2014, the League of Women Voters participated on the following: HISD Voter Registration, Web Chat, Phone Bank and Twitter Party.

The Community Partners involved were Univision-Channel 45, NALEO Educational Fund, Mi Familia Vota, Neighborhood Centers Inc, KTRK ABC/Channel 13, Harris County TAC.

The Events consisted of:

- Call-in Phone Bank at Channel 45 answered viewers' questions about Voter Registration. Live web chat at Channel 13 answered viewers' questions
- Twitter Party at Channel 13 (5-7 pm) and Channel 45 (6-8pm) launched a massive campaign of VR information, encouragement and celebration. Event trended in the Houston area.

League representation:

- At Univision 45: Tom Berg, Claudia Ortega-Hogue, Nancy Parra, Aracely Arrazolo
- At KTRK ABC/Channel 13: Beni Gutierrez, Kathy Cheng, Joel Gottlieb, Linda Cohn (Rising Star Justin Concepcion also in attendance, representing Harris County TAC



Social Media – 2014 Civic Engagement Summary

- Best Performing Posts FB/Twitter – Naturalization Ceremonies, Civic Engagement Topics

Local League	Service Area Population	FB followers (as of 12/19/14)	Twitter followers (as of 12/19/14)
LWV – New York City	8.4 million+ (rank #1)	659	1000
LWV-Chicago (now combined w/Cook County)	3.8 million+ (rank #2)	225	228
LWV-Los Angeles	2.7 million+ (rank #3)	595	537
LWV - Houston	2.1 million+ (rank #4)	2,796	1,996



Naturalization Ceremony picture racked up over 5K hits on FB (photo credit to Tom Berg)



Naturalization Ceremony picture of naturalizing military racked up over 177,000 impressions on Twitter within a couple of hours. Profuse retweets, including American Legion and Craig Newmark (Craig's List). (photo credit to Tom Berg)

Debates and Forums

LWV-HA again partnered with Houston MediaSource TV to sponsor a series of one-hour “Candidate Conversations” programs prior to the Primary and November General Election. The format for the programs was informal but informative with each candidate being give an opportunity to speak individually with LWV moderators Reda Hicks and Durrel Douglas and Aimee Mobley Turney.

The programs were telecast and streamed live from the studios of Houston MediaSource TV on Thursday evenings, were rebroadcast several times on the Houston MediaSource channel and

were available for on-demand viewing via the internet at <http://vimeo.com/channels/lwvhouston>. In addition to being available on the LWV website, the on-demand link was embedded on political blogs, candidate websites and websites of sister civic organizations. On-demand views of “Candidate Conversations” programs numbered well over 4,000.

Additionally, as part of our General Election partnership with KPRC (Ch 2), the LWV collaborated with KPRC in planning an Election Day call center from 7am to 7pm. Thanks to Judy Hollinger and Beni Gutierrez for taking the lead.

Speakers Bureau

Limited availability of speakers continued to limit our ability to respond to speaking requests; many speaking requests also included a request for Voter Registration services. We did make several presentations at high schools and colleges promoting our Youth Engagement efforts, provided resource people for several informal Q&A discussion programs and did some general presentations about LWV and our action agenda at all government levels.

League Television

Our partnership with Houston MediaSource enabled us to produce round table presentations on a wide variety of topics of importance to the community. The one-hour League programs aired on the first Thursday of each month. These are a very effective means of sharing information since the reach of these programs (original live broadcast, live streaming, rebroadcast and on-demand viewing on our website) is far beyond what we can achieve by sending speakers to small groups and organizations or even at our wonderful monthly general meetings. We do not have a way of measuring the numbers of broadcast viewers but we do know that on-demand views of these programs were well over 1,500; no program received less than 100 on-demand views.

Hispanic Community Outreach

Under the capable leadership of Tom Berg, LWV continued to expand our outreach into the Hispanic community through community events, television programs, Twitter and other social media outreach. This year we were able to work with partners Univision, NALEO Educational Fund, Mi Familia Vota, Neighborhood Centers Inc., and Houston Independent School District (HISD) in numerous bilingual voter registration efforts, Twitter parties, and GOTV programs.

Tom represented the League of Women Voters at the University of Houston Walk To Vote in which hundreds of students walk to vote. He also represented the League of Women Voters on the 2014 Citizenship Month City of Houston initiative.

Tom used his bilingual skills to represent the League and discuss voter registration and voter participation on several shows telecast on Univision during the election season.



Citizenship Forums



At forums held throughout the year, League volunteers were on hand to provide encouragement and assistance to thousands of eligible residents as they prepared their citizenship applications. This campaign continues as a joint project sponsored by the New Americans Campaign.

KPRC Election Hotline

LWV once again partnered with KPRC (Channel 2) to provide election hotline services for both the General Election. Dozens of volunteers answered phones from 6 am until 7 pm on Election Day. Hotline volunteers assisted hundreds of aspiring voters who had questions and concerns.

For Election Day, we had people split up between covering KPRC Call Center, Univision 45 Call Center and volunteers engaging voters via Twitter resulting in a total of over 2 million impressions—proof that social media continues to be a successful outreach component

**Reports of the Treasurer
Leslie Taylor**

6:58 PM
05/12/15

Accrual Basis

**League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Statement of Financial Position (a/k/a Balance Sheet)**

As of May 12, 2015

	<u>May 12, 15</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Bank of America Checking	16,944.01
PayPal	240.67
Total Checking/Savings	<u>17,184.68</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>17,184.68</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>17,184.68</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Long Term Liabilities	
Due to HEF	4,488.00
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>4,488.00</u>
Total Liabilities	4,488.00
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	11,194.27
Unrestricted Net Assets	140.00
Net Income	1,362.41
Total Equity	<u>12,696.68</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>17,184.68</u></u>

6:54 PM
05/12/15
Accrual Basis

League of Women Voters of the Houston Area
Statement of Financial Activities
June 1, 2014 through May 12, 2015

	Jun 1, '14 - May 12, 15
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Direct Public Support	
Member donations	1,546.24
Program Income	
Membership Dues	11,450.00
Special Event Income	
Annual Meeting Tickets	105.00
Total Income	13,101.24
Expense	
Contract Services	
Accounting Fees	450.00
Outside Contract Services	103.10
Facilities and Equipment	
Rent, Parking, Utilities	1,472.23
LWV-TX PMP	2,395.50
LWVUS PMP	3,371.26
Operations	
Printing and Copying	557.50
Supplies	13.12
Telephone, Telecommunications	330.05
website	405.00
Other Types of Expenses	
Bank & Pay Pal charges	472.40
Insurance - Liability, D and O	28.35
Other Costs	100.00
Other Types of Expenses - Other	5.00
Payroll Expenses	1,465.26
Program Expenses	125.00
Uncategorized Expenses	542.30
Total Expense	11,836.07
Net Ordinary Income	1265.17
Other Income/Expense	
Other Expense	
Refund	-97.24
Net Income	1362.41

6:49 PM
05/12/15
Cash Basis

LWV Education Fund
Statement of Financial Position (a/k/a Balance Sheet)
As of May 12, 2015

	<u>May 12, 15</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Old Mutual Annuity	14,161.38
Pay Pal	776.90
Bank of America	37,940.96
Total Checking/Savings	<u>52,879.24</u>
Accounts Receivable	
Accounts Receivable	506.21
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>506.21</u>
Other Current Assets	
Due from League	1,693.13
Undeposited Funds	250.00
Total Other Current Assets	<u>1,943.13</u>
Total Current Assets	55,328.58
Fixed Assets	
Accumulated Depreciation	-3,665.77
Computer Equipment	4,669.50
Total Fixed Assets	<u>1,003.73</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>56,332.31</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	-835.65
Total Accounts Payable	<u>-835.65</u>
Credit Cards	
Ed Fund Credit Card	390.74
Total Credit Cards	<u>390.74</u>
Other Current Liabilities	
Payroll Liabilities	-2,323.14
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>-2,323.14</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>-2,768.05</u>
Total Liabilities	-2,768.05

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Cash Basis

LWV Education Fund
Statement of Financial Activity
June 1, 2014 through May 12, 2015
Jun 1, '14 - May 12, 15

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Fundraisers	
Fall Fundraiser	10,105.00
Repast	1,580.00
Total Fundraisers	11,685.00
Interest	
	478.91
Contributions	
Voters Guide	2,147.50
Memorials	1,605.00
Corporate Donations	3,075.00
Member Donations	16,650.00
Non Member Donations	452.16
Total Contributions	23,929.66
Grants	
	500.00
Miscellaneous Income	
Sublet Rent -	1,740.00
Total Miscellaneous Income	1,740.00
Total Income	38,333.57
Gross Profit	
	38,333.57
Expense	
Development	
Repast	2,200.00
Fall Fundraiser	1,311.92
Total Development	3,511.92
Board	
Convention	509.87
Total Board	509.87
Administrative Expense	
Pay Pal Service Charge	621.84
Office Supplies	-62.22
Telephone	2,439.63
Postage and Delivery	40.00
Rent	9,040.84
Credit Card Machine Lease	131.61
Maintenance	5.38
Software update	377.79
Administrative Expense - Other	0.00

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LWV Education Fund
Statement of Financial Activity
June 1, 2014 through May 12, 2015

	<u>Jun 1, '14 - May 12, 15</u>
Total Administrative Expense	12,594.87
Payroll	
ED Salary	134.88
Admin Asst Salary	9,059.26
Payroll Taxes	
Federal Taxes	608.46
Tx Unemployment Taxes	0.00
Total Payroll Taxes	<u>608.46</u>
Total Payroll	9,802.60
Insurance	
D&O	-150.00
General Liability/Workers Comp	189.00
Total Insurance	<u>39.00</u>
Professional Services	600.00
Office and Administration	
Web Site	2,994.00
Total Office and Administration	<u>2,994.00</u>
Programs	
Issues Forum	137.50
Total Programs	<u>137.50</u>
Voters Service	
Voter Information	744.26
Voters Guide	
Vote411	1,100.00
Voters Guide - Other	8,957.30
Total Voters Guide	<u>10,057.30</u>
Total Voters Service	10,801.56
Dues	
LWV-T PMP	2,395.50
LWVUS PMP	3,371.24
Coalitions/Organizations	900.00
Total Dues	<u>6,666.74</u>
Reconciliation Discrepancies	3,559.58
Total Expense	<u>51,217.64</u>
Net Ordinary Income	-12,884.07

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Cash Basis

LWV Education Fund
Statement of Financial Activity
June 1, 2014 through May 12, 2015
Jun 1, '14 - May 12, 15

Other Income/Expense	
Other Expense	
Other Expenses	-67.45
Total Other Expense	-67.45
Net Other Income	67.45
Net Income	-12,816.62

Program Recommendations 2015

On May 15, 2015 the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of the Houston area passed a motion to form an ad hoc committee to look at the positions and update them in 2015 and 2016 and to take no action on the positions prior to the 95th annual meeting.

Article X.Sec. 3. (d) Program items submitted to the board of directors at the regular February board meeting but not recommended by the board of directors may be adopted at the annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of members present provided consideration is ordered by a majority vote of members present.

Article X. Sec.3. (e) Emergency program items submitted to the board of directors at a regular board meeting by a voting member before the annual meeting but not part of the proposed program may be adopted at annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of members present provided consideration is ordered by a majority vote of members present.

The following program items were not approved by the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area.

2015 Study Recommendations from the City/County Government Committee

A one-year study of consolidation of city and county services.

FOCUS: this study would focus on identifying similar services that are provided by both the city and county that might be profitably combined.

SCOPE: Survey a few major metropolitan areas where city and county services have been combined, for example Miami Dade County Florida, to identify what services have been combined, how they work, how successful they have been, and any pitfalls that could be identified. These results would help the study committee develop a template to identify those commonly provided services in Harris County and evaluate which ones could be combined for cost-saving to taxpayers without sacrificing quality and quantity of services provided.

Rationale: The Houston League already has a position in favor of consolidation of city county library services. This study would identify other services that could be combined. This study is recommended by the City County action team and has already identified one person willing to work on the committee if this study is adopted at annual meeting.

A two-year study of surge protection preparedness especially around the ship channel.

FOCUS: there are several studies already underway to identify ways to protect the coastal areas and the ship channel from hurricane storm surge. The league needs to be involved in the planning processes to protect the public's right to know and to participate. At some point these studies should result in actually implementing a plan to protect the coastal area and the ship

channel.

The first year would be devoted to learning about the plans being studied and creating criteria to apply to evaluating those plan proposals.

SCOPE: This study would focus on monitoring those studies and to make sure the public is given opportunities to participate in planning and commenting on those plans.

RATIONALE: for years dire warnings have been given about the devastation that would result if a hurricane hit just the right place for the storm surge to come up the ship channel. But nothing has yet been done to begin to create any protection. The league needs to be able to do what it can to ensure that something is done this time around. This study is recommended by the city County Action Team and by the Spring Branch unit and has already identified one person willing to work on the committee if the study is adopted the annual meeting.

An UPDATE is recommended to look at charter schools in the Houston area to see who charter them, who evaluates, what criteria are used to evaluate, and to whom are they accountable and if sanctions are necessary who applies them and how many have been sanctioned.

RATIONALE: the league has a state position in opposition to charter schools and vouchers. But charter schools exist. This update would inform members of the quality of education charter schools provide and could result in recommended changes to the state position or an update or new study at the state level.

2015 Program Recommendations from West Houston Unit

Busing/Houston
Public transportation
Water conservation
Texas legislature and gun laws
Effects re local immigration

Current Positions

Government

City Government (1993)

1. Support a strong Mayor/Council form of government with the following components:

*elected Mayor who is chief administrative officer of the city; who appoints all department heads subject to approval of Council; who has the power to remove department heads and staff members; who presides over Council and votes on all Council business but does not have the power of the veto.

*a City Council which functions as a strong legislative branch; has direct input into the formulation of the agenda for Council meetings; participates fully in goal setting for and in the development of the annual budget; can independently establish standing committees; has access

to a centralized council research staff which can research issues for Council as a whole; and has adequate access to legal counsel and services of the legal department.

- *an elected City Controller who is independent of the Mayor and City Council.

2. Support a City Council electoral structure that provides for:

- *members elected both at-large and by single-member districts.

- *a majority of the members elected from single-member districts

3. Support a City Council of optimal size that is determined by criteria which insure:

- *representation of all citizens

- *accountability

- *accessibility

- *effectiveness

- *affordability

4. Support of single-member district lines based substantially on population and which also:

- *ensure that minority rights are not diluted.

- *reflect geographic common sense.

- *maintain the integrity of neighborhoods.

- *create districts which are compact, contiguous, and continuous in shape.

5. Support 4-year terms for the offices of Mayor, Controller, and City Council with staggered terms for Council.

6. Support for a special election to be called to fill a Council vacancy when ten months remain in a two-year term or twenty months remain in a four-year term.

7. Oppose term limitations for elected officials. Support of appropriate measures, or “escape clauses,” which will enable citizens to vote for candidates of their choice if term limitations are in effect. (1991/1992)

History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.

Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.

Since the elimination of term limits was specifically prohibited from being considered, the League supported two four year terms with an escape clause that would allow a candidate to run after having been off council for one term. Council received the report of the task force but took no action.

City Charter

Support a complete revision of the city charter of Houston. (1974)

Financing City Government

1. Support financial policies that:

- *are guided by sound principles of fiscal responsibility and operational efficiency;

- *provide current revenues sufficient to support expenditures;

- *are based on concepts of appropriate long range planning methods;

- *are based on diversified sources of revenue.

2. Specifically support:

- *the use by the city of additional sources of revenues in order to decrease the reliance on property taxes for funding the General Fund Budget;

- *the maintenance of debt service costs for all types of financing at a level not to exceed 20% of the General Fund revenues;
- *the maintenance of a General Fund undesignated ending fund balance whose level will be a minimum of 5% of the total expenditures less debt service costs;
- *the setting of user fees and charges by the city at levels sufficient to recover the costs of providing those services, except for those services associated with provision for the general welfare and common good;
- *the development of financial and management processes and systems which result in operational efficiency and cost containment. (1989)

History: The study was undertaken to formulate a position on the policies and principles basic to financing City Government, beyond the budget process, and give the LWV-HA the means to address such concerns as the city's over-dependence on property taxes for funding the operating budget, its need to maintain a healthy emergency fund balance, the level of city indebtedness beyond investment in capital improvements, and others.

Action: No action has been taken on this position in recent years.

Budget Process

1. Support a budget process that meets these criteria:
 - *is based on long range planning;
 - *provides for thorough budget review and evaluation;
 - *has well defined channels for citizen input and review.
2. Specifically support:
 - *a budget format that provides for budget controls and accountability and provides for analysis that reflects policy goals and directions;
 - *a budget process that is regulated by well-defined timelines for each step of the budget process, and that these timelines are written into the city's code of ordinances, and that these timelines should provide for adequate timing for public study and input with each step;
 - *a budget process that encourages public participation by such specific means as:
 - *public meetings on budget policy and issues held by the mayor and council members in different sections of the city;
 - *publishing a brief budget summary in newspapers that would include important budget revenues and expenditures and highlights of major policy changes;
 - *availability of the proposed budget when given to council with provision for a number of copies available to the public at cost;
 - *giving adequate notice of all proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making all public records accessible.
 - *notice of all hearing dates.
 - *a budget process that provides for testimony by the individual citizen at the public hearing or as provided for by state law prior to the adoption of the proposed budget.(1988)

History: This position was first reached in 1975. It was updated in 1988 to emphasize public input, long range planning, and availability of budget documents a budget calendar; and support for integrating the Capital Improvement Budget with the Operating Budget.

Action: Much of what the League advocated has been achieved, and no action has been taken in recent years.

Capital Improvement Budget

Support the consideration of the capital improvement budget along with the operating budget. (1988)

Libraries

Support measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston area residents, including merger of city and county systems and the regional library concept. (1969)

History: When this study began in the late 1960's, libraries were few and of low quality. Library budgets were politically easy to cut.

Action: Since 1969 this position has been used to lobby City Council for needed funding. We have also worked with other groups seeking increased library hours and personnel. There have been significant improvements.

Although merger of the city and county library systems has been politically impossible, the two systems do cooperate.

Annexation/Disannexation

1. Support annexation by Houston of the Ship Channel Industrial Districts, with negotiation of short-term contracts in the interim. (1977) The LWV-HA recognizes the importance to the city of Houston of the power to annex additional geographic territory in order to protect its economic base and to provide a government which addresses regional needs. However the League feels that Houston should exercise this power within the following guidelines: (1979)

- *Checkerboard patterns should be avoided;

- *No unincorporated areas should be left surrounded by the city (except those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city);

- *Houston should not pass over economically depressed areas as it proceeds with annexation;

- *Houston should plan annexation in advance in order to make sure that city departments are prepared for expanded services;

- *Houston should notify residents of areas to be annexed in advance and give them the opportunity to help plan how needed services will be provided and/or coordinated with facilities already in place;

- *Houston should provide services related to public health and safety services immediately upon annexation, and set a schedule to provide other services within a reasonable time;

- *Houston should provide adequate levels of services to all annexed areas, and this should be done without extra assessments to residents of areas where such assessments would be a severe burden. These should include: improving streets and drainage to a level at which services can be provided to people living on those streets; and provision of city water and wastewater service within a reasonable time if the area has no adequate facilities;

*Establish an impartial board to weigh the importance of annexation to the health of the city and the ability of the city to accommodate the needs of the area. (1979)

2. Support a comprehensive planning process for growth, open spaces, and capital investment in the ETJ, recognizing the possibility of eventual annexation of these areas. (1979)

3. Support the adoption of a subdivision ordinance for the city and the ETJ. (1979)

4. Support policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)

5. Support a policy encouraging water districts to consist of a single parcel of land. (1979)

6. Support a long-range policy of annexation and the adoption of a policy for annexation and disannexation to include:

*legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted;

*a review board, preferably at the state level, to hear cases of disputed annexations and disannexations;

*a requirement for an annexing city to establish a baseline for the provision of municipal services to be maintained in all parts of the city and provided to newly annexed areas at the same level. (1983)

History: The last use of this position was for the annexation of Kingwood in the 1980's.

Action: No action has been taken in recent years as no annexation has taken place.

Comprehensive Planning

1. Support planning in Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction through:

*the development of goals and priorities for Harris County by assessing the needs of the total community with maximum public participation;

*central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;

*development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;

*feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County;

*increased use of Harris County of the planning services of the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the development by H-GAC of practical services reflecting the planning needs of Harris County. (1976)

2. Support the development and adoption of a long-range flexible, constantly updated, comprehensive plan, developed with adequate citizen input. This plan should include:

*the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;

*the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;

*a broad-based planning commission with members with diverse backgrounds and expertise;

*a comprehensive plan which includes economic, social, and environmental concerns as well as physical development;

*public involvement in the planning process at the neighborhood level, and public hearings on proposed plans;

*an explanation to the public by the City Council of why any given plan is or is not adopted; (1976)

*a strong role for the City Planning Commission, committed to the full range of powers granted it by the city charter, and to the coordination of its work with an equally strong Planning Department; cooperation between the private and public planning entities, with public participation throughout the process;

*vigorous enforcement of current regulations, and the enactment of additional ordinances which focus on civic concerns such as traffic congestion and storm water runoff; preserve and improve the quality of life in Houston neighborhoods;

*the use of growth management techniques such as performance standards, impact fees, and both shortterm and long-term capital improvements budget planning;

*a city ordinance requiring the setting aside of land for open space and parks. (1984)

History: Studies in 1976 and 1984 addressed the lack of long-range planning in both the City of Houston and Harris County and coordination or planning between the City and the County.

Action: LWV-HA has consistently lobbied for a zoning ordinance for the City of Houston. In 2003, the League joined with the Blueprint Houston project to promote public participation in comprehensive city planning.

Tax Abatement & TIRZ

The LWV-HA supports the use of tax abatements and tax increment reinvestment zones in the Houston region with appropriate oversight and public input. The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports tax abatements as an economic development tool in competitive site situations to attract new “magnet industries” and to retain existing businesses and encourage them to upgrade and provide new jobs. The League also supports tax abatement as an environmental incentive, for historic preservation, and to revitalize blighted areas. Tax abatement contracts should be analyzed for public benefit and rigidly monitored for compliance and should be terminated if contract terms are not met. The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) with appropriate oversight and analysis by the governmental jurisdiction(s) involved and community input, to develop or redevelop blighted areas, for land use management, and for economic growth in tax base.

For both tax abatements and TIRZs, the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports:

1. Annual collection and dissemination of objective data.
2. Regional cooperation.
3. A mandatory public hearing for meaningful and timely input on whether a proposed contract should be granted.
4. Regular re-evaluation of criteria in light of broader community planning goals. (2006)

History: The League originally studied tax abatements in 1996. Our position was restudied and TIRZs were added to the study in 2006.

Action: The 2006 study revealed that both the City and the County had tightened up the requirements and the monitoring of tax abatements, and no action has been taken under this position since then.

Ethics

Support of effective ethics regulation with strong enforcement.

History: This position was adopted in 2007.

Action: In 2008, Laura Blackburn served on the Citizens Task Force on Ethics established by County Judge Ed Emmett. The League lobbied for a bill in the 81st Legislature that would have closed the “revolving door” and prohibited county officials from lobbying for a certain period of time following the termination of their county employment. The Governor vetoed the bill.

Natural Resources

Parks and Recreation

Support measures to insure acquisition, maintenance, and development of public lands in the Houston area by:

- *comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;
- *adequate funding;
- *adoption of an objective priority planning policy;
- *investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate parkland acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers;
- *maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;
- *maximum use of schools and churches for program development;
- *opposition to long-term private and public leasing of public lands. (1970)

Action: Since 2002, the League has been a member of the Houston Quality of Life Coalition and has supported the coalition’s goals. In recent years the League has lobbied for more aggressive land acquisition and water conservation policies by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and for additional funding for the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

Transportation

Support comprehensive transportation plans which include:

- *best land use of land and access to employment, cultural, civic, medical, educational, and other facilities;
- *public participation in the early planning stages; (1971)
- *a well-balanced, environmentally sensitive, multi-modal transportation system which includes buses, rail, and well-regulated paratransit (jitneys, etc.);
- *cooperation and funding of joint ventures among the different transportation agencies – Highway Department, Metro, and city and county;
- *use of highway funds in the following order of priority:
 1. maintenance
 2. new construction

3. public mass transit

*limited use of user fees such as toll roads to help fund development and/or construction of a transportation system. (1985)

History: The League has historically been concerned about mobility and studied the issue several times in the 1970's and 1980's.

Action: LWV-HA and Houston-Galveston Area Council lobbied with other groups to pass enabling state legislation for a city referendum to establish a transit authority.

Flood Control

Support comprehensive long-range planning for flood damage avoidance in Harris County by considering:

- *all alternative methods for flood damage avoidance;
- *the effect of future development on flooding patterns;
- *the full effects of stream modifications;
- *the flood plain as a multiple use resource, especially its role as a natural retention system which reduces and delays peak flows;
- *economic, social, and environmental factors, especially water quality. (1978)

History: At 11 feet above sea level, there is no place in the Houston area that might not be under water in a 5 inch rain. New flood maps were finalized in 2005. Some areas (e.g., Bellaire) have been expanded; others reduced.

Action: The League has a member on the citizen Harris County Flood Control Task Force (the chairperson is the League representative). Several League members representing other organizations are also members of the Task Force, which meets quarterly. The Harris County Flood Control District does a good job planning as defined by our position except, perhaps, in considering "the effect of future development on flooding patterns," which is governed by Houston and Harris County, not the Flood Control District.

Solid Waste

Support a long-range solid waste management plan which emphasizes:

- *recycling and development of new technology;
- *separation of solid waste at the source;
- *judicious use of incineration and landfills;
- *effective land use principles;
- *control of air and water pollution;
- *regional planning;
- *promotion of public education efforts;
- *citizen participation. (1972)

History: The League began studying solid waste issues in response to federal, state, and local statutes, and because of controversy arising from the operation of the Holmes Road incinerator.

Action: In the past, LWV-HA has lobbied for reduction in packaging so less waste is generated, for greater use of recycled materials, and for economic incentives which enable recycled materials to compete effectively with “virgin” materials. No action has been taken on this position since the late 1990's.

Toxic Substances

Support:

- *the protection of public health with special concern for sensitive populations as the primary factor in determining regulatory action and decision-making involving toxic substances, with economic costs a secondary consideration;

- *a policy requiring industry and unions to fully inform employees and the public of potential risks of toxic substances, both in the work place and the community;

- *informing the public of any possibility of adverse effect of toxic substances via clear labeling, public forums, public access to information, and articles and programs in all media to help make informed choices;

- *regulating the transportation of toxic substances by:

1. enforcement of safety, speed, and inspection regulations;

2. establishment of realistic schedules, routes, and work practices to protect the public health;

3. requirement of complete and informative labeling on the transporting vehicle, whether hazardous product or waste;

- *stronger regulatory efforts to control hazardous pollutants in air and water by frequent re-examination of laws and regulations as new information is developed through research, and by enlarging existing regulatory agencies, as necessary, even at increased costs to the taxpayers. (1983)

History: Passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act in 1976 spurred LWV-HA's examination of the hazards of toxic substances in Texas' Gulf Coast region. After several general meetings, the 1983 consensus was reached.

Action: League members have served on the Toxic Substances Task Force and the Houston Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). Members now serve on the Environment Committee of the Greater Houston Partnership. In 2005, we testified before Houston City Council and the Texas Senate Natural Resources Committee, urging stronger laws and enforcement of laws on air quality.

Building Codes in Coastal Areas

Support the most up-to-date building codes possible for coastal areas, taking into account future storms of increasing intensity and frequency as well as cost. Building codes should take into account elevation, roofs and windows and should be strictly enforced at every governmental level. It is viewed that Category 3 protection is appropriate for this area.

Social Policy

Administration of Justice

Support the removal of certain areas of human behavior from criminal prosecution: sexual activity between legally competent consenting adults, gambling, adult access to pornography, use of alcohol. (1975)

Support measures for rehabilitation of offenders, which would include:

- *punishment or penalties which fit the crime;
- *more equitable punishment;
- *alternative arrangements to placement of juveniles in state schools which would include small, family type units close to home with effective supervision and qualified personnel;
- *provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program.

Action: The League has lobbied for repeal of Penal Code 21.06 to decriminalize consensual sexual activity between adults and participated in programs to educate the public about voting rights of ex-felons.

Bilingual Education

*Support educational legislation, policies, and programs that take into consideration the following:

*The purpose of bilingual education should be to teach every limited-English proficient (LEP) student to read, write, and speak English as soon as possible while maintaining academic achievement.

*The basis on which the effectiveness of bilingual education should be determined are:

1. how quickly transition into English is made;
2. standardized testing results of academic achievement, using valid data that can be confirmed.

*Factors that negatively influence the academic achievement of LEP students are:

1. limited supply of qualified, committed teachers;
2. high mobility of students' families;
3. economic hardships;
4. low educational expectations of the teachers, family, and the children.

*The factors can be mitigated by:

1. consistency of curriculum among school districts;
2. adequate resources available from the Texas Education Agency;
3. working with families and teachers to raise educational expectations;
4. creating new avenues for recruiting additional teachers who are qualified and committed.

*Because of the preservation of ethnic cultures is the responsibility of the home and other institutions, funding for bilingual education should be focused on the acquisition of English proficiency.

History: LWV-HA conducted a two-year study of bilingual education in the Greater Houston Area to review and evaluate federal and state laws, funding mechanisms, and policies as well as

how programs are being implemented and the criteria used for evaluating the success or effectiveness of the programs. A position was adopted on April 24, 2000.

Action: No action has been taken in recent years.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Support the requirement for schools to honor parental written requests not to use corporal punishment on their children. (1989) Support the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools. This is a local position only.

History: The Child Abuse and Neglect study was begun in Houston in 1988. The Committee soon discovered that child abuse and neglect should be a state issue. At the LWVT convention held in Houston in 1990, the study was adopted as a non-recommended item and was studied locally by LWV-HA members under the guidelines of the LWVT. The child care issue was studied that same year as a recommended LWVT item.

Action: In recent years, the League has lobbied for child abuse prevention programs to be restored with health care provided for all our children in protective care; caseworker caseloads to reflect the national standard of 12 to 18 cases per worker; and for Children's Protective Services (CPS) to be adequately funded with the latest technology.

Domestic Violence

Support efforts to:

- *increase community awareness of the incidence of domestic violence;
- *establish a process for keeping records on domestic violence calls, responses, charges, and dispositions;
- *provide special training of police and special squads to deal with domestic violence;
- *establish crisis intervention teams and provide aid to the victims;
- *encourage the District Attorney's office to prosecute charges of domestic violence;
- *encourage sensitivity to the problem of domestic violence throughout the justice system;
- *encourage increased cooperation between agencies that deal with the problem;
- *make counseling available for all members of a household involved in domestic violence. (1983)

History: LWV-HA has had a position on domestic violence since 1983.

Action: LWV-HA was part of a coalition that successfully lobbied for setting up the Domestic Violence Unit in the District Attorney's office and League members volunteered in the office in the 1980's and early 1990's. The League supported the anti-stalking law that was revised in the 1997 Texas Legislative session. No action has been taken since then.

Education

1. Support measures to improve educational accountability program in the school districts of the greater Houston area, with:

*shared responsibility of educational accountability at all levels of the educational process, including the Texas Legislature, the Texas Education Agency, local school boards, administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, and the community.

*state legislative accountability for fair and equitable funding;

*teacher accountability for knowledge of competency in the subjects they teach;

*student accountability for conduct and attitude;

*community accountability for knowledge of election issues;

*community involvement in accountability programs;

*comprehensive student evaluations including methods other than standardized testing;

*parental input in the evaluation process of the school district personnel. (1978)

2. Support equal access to quality education, including:

*providing opportunities for students to learn to function in our pluralistic community;

*offering and encouraging the achievement of academic skills which enable each child to function at his/her highest potential;

*providing superior programs and teaching which take into account the needs of the individual pupil;

*offering superior programs in college preparatory and occupational/vocational training;

*providing free transportation as an integrative tool for those requesting it;

*student transfer policies which preserve existing integration;

*magnet-alternative schools;

*closing under-utilized schools;

*combinations of the above. (1976)

History: LWV-HA adopted its education positions in the mid-1970's in response to perceived inequities in school funding and educational opportunities. In 2002-03, committee members restudied the LWV-HA position on education.

Action: Action since has included monitoring state legislation on school finance (especially vouchers), and the impact of the religious right on education through affiliation with the Texas Freedom Network. The school tax base impact of tax abatements was considered in the 2006 LWV-HA Tax Abatement study that found only limited use of tax abatements by school districts. The League has consistently opposed vouchers and supported adequate education funding.

Health

1. Support the establishment of comprehensive, culturally appropriate, and inclusive public health services for Houston Area residents. These services should be accessible to the public in terms of cost and location. Clients should understand available services. Emphasis should be given to preventive and primary care.

2. Support joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication and gaps in health services and to improve the availability and quality of care including:

*Centralized regional governance to pool resources and increase effectiveness;

*Collaborative efforts by city, county, and non-profit public health care providers including programs to disseminate information enabling users to better manage their care; and

*Channels for consumer input into health planning.

3. Support measures to control the escalation of health care costs including:

- *Increasing the insured population;
- *Accessing all available matching funds;
- *Utilization of local public and private funds to pay Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) premiums/Medicare Part B premiums for indigent elderly;
- *Increasing the number of federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), school clinics, and other clinics that deliver comprehensive medical services so that care is delivered in the most appropriate setting, thus lowering the use of expensive emergency room services;
- *Area-wide coordination of electronic health records including immunizations to be accessible by all health care facilities;
- *Area-wide coordination of highly specialized care involving expensive equipment; and
- *Utilization of para-professionals such as nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, and dental hygienists.

History: The LWV-HA study evaluated the existing health care providers, distribution, and services in light of increases in the number of uninsured residents, over-crowding in public hospitals, and ever increasing reliance on emergency rooms to provide primary care services at prohibitive cost.

Action: LWV-HA has lobbied to prevent cuts in the Hospital District budget. In 2002, LWV-HA opposed shortened hours for city clinics. League members served on a committee to study public health care in Houston and issued a report in 2005. Also in 2005, LWV-HA lobbied for a Hospital District budget that realistically addressed the demand for services.

Housing

1. Support equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing

and continued support of existing positions:

- *a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health, and sanitation codes;
- *adequate provisions for enforcing these codes, and any relocation of families necessary through such enforcement, to be the obligation of the city;
- *completion of a workable program for land use and housing for more orderly growth of the city, thus leading to qualification for federal assistance;
- *encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)

2. Support a substantial increase in low and moderate-income housing stock expenditures for Houston and Harris County above the 26% and 30% of Community Development Block Grant funds allocated in 1990. The League believes that Housing Assistance should be the top priority of Community Development Block Grant funding. We support equal priority for Capital Improvements and Economic Development.

History: Our housing position was prompted by serious rental housing quality deficiencies in the 1970's. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) position arose from concerns that insufficient funds were being devoted to low and moderate housing as opposed to economic development.

Action: LWV-HA used its position to work with Houston City Council to create a housing code, which led to improvements in rental housing stock. No action has been taken on this position in recent years.

Mandatory Homeowner Associations

The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports changes in Texas law governing mandatory homeowner associations which would provide:

- *Protection against foreclosure on homesteads.
- *Priority of payments so that assessment payments apply first to assessments and then to non-assessment items.
- *Secret ballots in homeowner elections.
- *Adequate safeguards against fraud to assure uniform, honest and accurate election results.
- *That the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Open Records Act cover homeowner associations. (2008)

Sexuality Education and Reproductive Services

1. Support comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County, including:
 - *greater parental involvement;
 - *broadening curricula;
 - *student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors, and teachers;
 - *greater use of city and county educational programs;
 - *programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)
2. Support adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs, including:
 - *confidentiality of all clients;
 - *efficient scheduling of family planning services;
 - *advertising;
 - *adequate funding;
 - *adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)
3. Support equal access to legal and medically sound pregnancy termination services for all residents of Houston and Harris County, with government funding and/or a combination of government/private funding available for low and moderate income residents. (1982)

History: This position was adopted in 1982.

Action: The LWV cooperates with Planned Parenthood at all levels to keep Roe v. Wade, or freedom of choice, the law of the land. The League supports providing foreign aid for family planning. In 2002 wrote letter to US senators urging ratification of CEDAW (Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) treaty.

Report of the Awards Committee

Committee: Linda Cohn and Sharon Cunningham

The Awards Committee has the pleasure of recognizing League members for distinguished service. In keeping with tradition, 2015 recipients will be revealed at the Annual Meeting. These individuals were honored at the 2014 Annual Meeting for outstanding service during the 2013-2014 League Year.

2013-2014 Outstanding Service

Beni Gutierrez	Sarah Schimmer
Judy Hollinger	Barbara Swartz
Ryan Leach	Leslie Taylor
Penny Milbouer	Mary Titus

No Helen Hunter Award was presented.

Guidelines for the Awards Program

1. Present Outstanding Service Awards for notable accomplishment to individuals who, over the course of the League Year have shepherded a significant program or project to great success. Use meaningful criteria, or yardsticks, to evaluate activities and performance, such as:

- Is it mission-critical?
Is it driven by the organization's goals, e.g. financial development, membership growth/diversity, strong leadership, organizational excellence, community outreach, etc..
- Is it relevant?
- Did it attain results?

The number of Outstanding Service Awards presented each year should not be limited, but the Awards Committee should take care to maintain high standards to avoid citing too many recipients so that these recognitions remain a distinctive and meaningful honor.

2. Continue the practice of presenting a **Helen Hunter Award** when there's a suitable candidate. No more than one per year. A key requirement is "over the course of membership".

This award was established as a way to honor Helen Hunter, LWV-Houston president from 1982-1985, and to recognize and encourage valued leadership. This tradition dates to 1995 although a HH recognition has not been designated in each year.

The Helen Hunter Award is presented to an individual who, over the course of League membership, has epitomized the exemplary spirit of Helen Hunter in furthering the mission of the League of Woman Voters in a cordial, steady and effective way; who has brought great credit to the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area; and who has thereby brought great benefit to the community we serve.

Recipients to Date

1995	Claudia Kemondo	2003	Alice May Berthelsen	2009	Millie Whittington
1996	Melba Drake	2004	Jan Wilbur	2010	Linda Cohn
1997	Margaret Kolodzie	2005	Barb Swartz	2011	Sharon Cunningham
1998	Mary Gillette	2006	Gwen Essinger	2012	Nancy Parra
2002	Bette John	2008	Judy Hollinger	2013	Jacqueline Alfred

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Report of the Budget Committee

Committee: Sharon Cunningham (Chair), Bette John, Sue Schwaller, Leslie Taylor, Aimee Mobley Turney (ex-officio)

Please note that the membership is presently charged with approving a budget for the League of Women Voters of the Houston Area only. A budget for the League of Women Voters of Houston Education Fund will be approved by the LWV-Education Fund Board of Trustees at their first meeting of the 2015-16 fiscal year. Items pertaining to the LWV-Education Fund are included for information only.

Budget data charts begin on page 42 and conclude on page 46.