

Positions on Issues

League of Women Voters of San Diego County

INTRODUCTION

LWV of San Diego County has taken the following positions after study, member education and consensus. LWV can take action on these positions as well as state and national positions, before county governmental bodies. Every LWV member has the opportunity to help choose new areas of study to add to these positions.

For the purpose of these League positions on issues, San Diego County and San Diego "region" are geographically the same. San Diego County is the arm of state government services for the whole area, including all the incorporated cities, and is the provider of local governmental services for the unincorporated areas that are not provided by special districts.

There are, as well, governmental matters in the San Diego region, which go beyond single jurisdictions or concern more than one agency or general-purpose government. Some regional issues extend beyond San Diego County borders to Imperial, Orange, or Riverside Counties, and some to Baja California.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND SAN DIEGO REGIONAL AGENCIES (1978*)

Support of informed and active participation of citizens in San Diego County government and regional agencies requiring:

1. adequate notice and information about proposed actions, using various avenues of publicity ;
2. provision for public access to meetings, agendas, reports, records and persons making decisions;

3. emphasis on citizen participation at early stages of the decision-making process;
4. well-defined channels for citizen input and review;
5. broad-based citizen participation that reflects all aspects of the community---geographical, economic and social;
6. consideration of the effect of times and locations of meetings, agenda item placement, transportation and other costs on citizen participants;
7. adequate funding, staffing and training to achieve effective citizen participation.

STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY AND REGION (1986, 2001, 2002)

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County takes responsibility for monitoring governmental issues of the County of San Diego and those regional issues that are addressed by governments and agencies within the San Diego region.

I. For the County of San Diego we support:

1. a Board of Supervisors of more than five members;
2. supervisor districts drawn to maintain the integrity of communities;
3. the election of the District Attorney and the Sheriff;
4. the appointment of all other department heads.

II. In the field of regional government we support:

1. state action to expand the responsibilities and authority of existing, con- solidated or future regional decision-making body/bodies to:
 - A. Prepare, implement and maintain a comprehensive regional plan and infrastructure capital improvement program.
 - B. Administer the plan, the project review, and enforcement process to ensure local compliance with the comprehensive regional plan, including:

- review of the components of local general plans that have regional implications
- review of major development projects having regional impact, including environmental analysis, for consistency with the comprehensive plan and regional infrastructure plan
- review of any plan for siting a new airport or expanding Lindbergh Field by the Regional Airport Authority for consistency with the region's comprehensive plan; a public vote should occur if a new airport site is proposed
- review of local housing elements for compliance with state housing element law, which includes addressing regional share goals.

C. Allocate to or withhold federal and state funds from a local jurisdiction for infrastructure, affordable housing projects, and for protection of natural resources, open space and agricultural lands in accordance with compact growth principles. The use of eminent domain for regionally significant projects should only be utilized as a solution of last resort.

2. region wide governmental bodies that reflect the population distribution and the environmental, social and economic diversity of the county. We support a directly elected body from newly established districts (of no more than 350,000 population) with fixed, staggered terms. The Policy Advisory Committee should consist of elected office holders appointed from the County's incorporated cities and the county.

3. regional over local jurisdiction when efficiency in the delivery of services can be clearly measured and could be improved by increasing the scale of operations;

4. a regional governing agency as the coordinator of intergovernmental policies and selected services within the region (the services to be coordinated include those administered by agencies established by the Legislature, such as transit, water supply, and port/tidelands activities);

5. a regional governing agency as the advocate and representative of the San Diego region's collective general purpose governments at the state and federal level; and proportional financial support of the local council of governments by its members.

III For all governmental agencies we support:

1. measures which assure the accessibility, visibility, and accountability of public officials;

2. measures which recognize community character and values; and efforts to reduce and consolidate the number of special districts where feasible.

FINANCING COUNTY GOVERNMENT (1992)

The League of Women voters of San Diego County supports County governmental services and programs designed to meet the unique needs of the San Diego region, organized for public accessibility. The financial adequacy, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of these services and programs should be closely monitored by elected officials and by the public. Competent staffs who are fairly compensated should carry out implementation.

Programs should be evaluated and prioritized for best use of available funds; long-term costs of short-term economies should be considered. Preventive measures should have high priority.

Funding for maintenance should be included in the planning of capital projects and in future annual budgets.

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County also supports substantial funding by the state and federal governments of the programs they mandate, with periodic review of state-mandated but locally administered programs to adjust funding formulas to reflect changed circumstances.

Proposals for reform of the state and local governmental financial structure should be developed by a statewide commission composed of members experienced in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, as well as citizens knowledgeable about the electorate and the economy of California, and including a representative from the League of Women voters.

TRANSPORTATION (1990)

Support of a transportation system that meets the following standards: safety, favorable environmental qualities, convenience, availability to all; adequate funding from fees, assessments and taxes at all levels of government.

Support of transportation plans as an integral part of land use plans.

Support of transportation planning and decision making as the responsibility of a regional planning organization, structured to be responsive and responsible to the public.

Objectives:

1. Public and private educational transit systems that meet safety standards with regular inspections.
2. Transportation plans that consider the environment including air quality and sensitive lands.
3. Convenient access to transportation systems.
4. Transportation systems supported largely from general funds, with consideration given to all appropriate funding alternatives.
5. Land use planning by all local governments that considers transportation and circulation with the goal of minimizing motor vehicle traffic.
6. Transportation standards that are set at the regional level and that consider all modes of transportation.
7. Local transportation planning that considers the larger region in which it is situated.

REGIONAL PLANNING (1970)

Support for flexible countywide planning, with board outlines that provide guidelines and leave the details and implementation at the local support level.

Continuation and strengthening of the San Diego Association of Governments or other councils of government.

Support for an emphasis on conserving the physical resources of San Diego County, while providing people-oriented services.

PARKS (1973)

Support of the provision of regional and local parks and recreation facilities for all the residents of San Diego County whether they live in an incorporated or unincorporated community.

Support of an equitable, broadly based method of financing for parks and recreation.

All methods of acquisition should be considered.

Support of the acquisition of park and recreation lands before or concurrent with development.

Facilities should be provided according to need, with reasonable accessibility.

Support of efficiency of administration.

LAND USE (1975)

Support of a regional growth policy for the county which:

1. recognizes the difference in community needs for life-support systems;
2. assures the provision of comprehensively planned and managed capital facilities and general services, including schools and transportation

accessibility to jobs, and which minimizes urban sprawl and maintains established patterns of growth and community identity within an area;

3. implements community planning as defined by State law and allows maximum citizen participation and self-determination in community planning and decision making;

4. promotes conservation of critical natural resources, including valuable agricultural lands and open space, and protects or improves air and water quality;

5. reaffirms the provision of adequate parks and recreational needs, including land acquisition;

6. enforces the provision of fair, decent, balanced housing by choice, type and costs for all residents of San Diego County.

CHILD ADVOCACY (1980)

I. Child Abuse and Neglect:

Children of San Diego County have the right to grow up free of abuse and neglect, and so the League of Women Voters of San Diego County supports:

1. emergency facilities including interim residences and a 24-hour hotline with information and referral capabilities;

2. systematic training of those professionals involved with children to identify, respond to and treat victims;

3. development of foster homes plus training and resources of providers of care ;

4. increased availability of treatment, such as counseling , to families under stress as well as to victims of abuse and neglect;

5. coordination of all agency services dealing with abuse and neglect;

6. increased emphasis on prevention of abuse and neglect through awareness programs and parenting education.

II. Child Day Care

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County supports:

1. provision of diverse, alternative forms of day care for children, responsive to the widely different social and economic needs of families;
2. creation of public, private and family day care programs that emphasize developmental rather than custodial activities, varying curricula to meet the needs of children of all ages, offering flexible hours and a sliding fee scale;
3. parent education and involvement as essential to quality day care;
4. government efforts to:
 - a. allocate funds to meet day care needs;
 - b. streamline zoning and licensing laws;
 - c. increase supervision and training for day care providers;
 - d. expand infant care services.
5. financial incentives to businesses to provide day care and tax exemptions to families for day care costs;
6. allotment of day care sites in housing and industrial developments; the use of school sites as one alternative for the placement of day care programs.

III. Juvenile Delinquency Prevention

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County supports:

1. a juvenile delinquency prevention effort that gives priority to providing opportunities for all youth to participate constructively in society and that will reduce the predisposition toward delinquency;
2. educational programs which are relevant to child and youth needs and that prepare students for life experiences such as initial employment, family living and peer relationships;

3. collaboration among schools and community resources to provide after-school activities, utilizing cross-age and peer involvement and making use of the skills and knowledge of the behavioral and life sciences;
4. information sharing and joint efforts among public and private agencies to improve services to the young at-risk, and to develop primary prevention programs;
5. cooperative community efforts to provide practical job and skills training leading to useful work experience;
6. coordination and improvement of delinquency prevention services through public policy decisions in planning, evaluation and funding;
7. adequate funding that assures continuity, and provides accountability for basic services, and encourages innovative programs that show promise of positive results.

The positions on Child Abuse and Neglect and Child Day Care are integral parts of a Juvenile Delinquency Prevention program. Together, these three parts constitute the Child Advocacy position.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (1984)

Support of public libraries as a basic service of government with adequate funding by local, state, and federal governments.

Support of free access by all persons to public library service as a means for lifelong education and learning and as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society.

Objectives:

1. Increased recognition of the essential service of free public libraries in a democratic society and government's basic obligation to provide the service with adequate funding;
2. Use of all available funding for public libraries:

- a. recognition by local governments that they have the prime responsibility to finance public libraries;
 - b. increased state and federal aid for public libraries, especially but not exclusively for capital improvements, special library projects, and inter-library cooperation;
 - c. legislation for special tax for public libraries, if and when deemed feasible;
 - d. Continued and increased funding from private sources for special projects, with library control of policy retained;
 - e. opposition to charging fees for basic library services;
3. Measures designed to increase the efficiency and economy of public library operations;
- a. consolidation of library functions or systems when service would be improved at the same cost or maintained at a lower cost;
 - b. use of volunteers to supplement paid staff only if a librarian is available for their training and supervision;
 - c. increased automation in all aspects of library operations to release staff for direct service to the public;
4. Recognition of the need for branch libraries, with limited functions;
5. Improved level and quality of public library service achieved through consolidation of functions and/or systems when consolidation is politically feasible and when it achieves cost savings that will not adversely affect, and wherever possible will improve the quality of service.

THE ROLE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT IN RESPONDING TO THE IMPACT OF THE SERIOUSLY MENTALLY ILL (1997)

Regarding the County Mental Health System, LWV of San Diego County supports:

1. the establishment of a coordinated system of 24-hour regional centers, each providing a full spectrum of health services, including a Case Manager for each patient where indicated.
2. treatment programs for the dually-diagnosed (mental illness plus substance abuse / addiction)
3. the maintenance of a full-time, adequately staffed and funded Community Outreach program for the seriously mentally ill.
4. the provision of coordinated, integrated services by its various agencies for mentally ill clients of all ages.
5. planning and providing for adequate, steady funding streams for programs for County mentally ill clients.
6. increased funding for shelter beds, supportive services and housing for the mentally ill.
7. holding persons with psychiatric disabilities who are accused or convicted of a crime be held in appropriate psychiatric facilities rather than jails.
8. increasing and updating the training of special response teams of law enforcement officers who respond to emergencies involving persons who are mentally ill.
9. the establishment through the County Mental Health Services of an adequately funded , independent coalition of providers made up of clients, family members and interested citizens empowered to recommend necessary changes.

Fire Protection (2008-10)

The League of Women Voters of San Diego County supports: A county regional fire protection and emergency medical system; a sustainable source of funding for prevention and suppression of fires; increased cooperation among cities and unincorporated fire services as may apply; and expansion of mutual aid fire protection agreements..

1. Consolidate fire protection both regionally and structurally in order to create unified programs which integrate fire services in the unincorporated areas of the County.
2. Designate dedicated and stable revenue sources to fund necessary and efficient fire protection services.
3. Encourage the merger of fire departments where feasible and support contracting for fire services by smaller jurisdictions.
4. Maintain the present system of both paid and volunteer staffing.
5. Enforce codes and consolidated standards for fire-safe developments, general construction, and building maintenance.
6. Promote citizen/homeowner fire-safe education programs and encourage understanding and protection of the county's unique ecosystems.
7. Support residents' cell phone registration in the Mass Notification System (Reverse 911).