

League of Women Voters of Montgomery (LWVM) 2009-2010 Program

Positions

League Principles

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transportation (Adopted 1999)

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery supports a subsidized public transportation system for the City and County of Montgomery. Buses should be part of such a system. The public transportation system should be part of an overall long-range plan created with input from representatives of various community groups, which have a valid interest in public transit. Such groups might include the Montgomery Transportation Coalition, representatives of outlying businesses and areas schools, Industrial Development Groups, the League of Women Voters, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Administration of the city transportation system should be by a board appointed by the Mayor with input from the City Council and interest groups, including the users of the system.

The City should be exploring other transit options, as well as multi-county or regional transportation systems.

Funding sources for the system should include public funds (federal, state and local) as well as advertising. Creative funding sources should also be explored.

Local Election Processes (Adopted March 2003)

In order to encourage maximum voter participation and to ensure trust in the voting process, the League of Women Voters of Montgomery supports the following actions for Montgomery County and City elections:

1. Periodic review of election processes to be conducted by a panel of election officials and citizens, including the handicapped. The panel should be empowered to suggest improvements in the elections process, including handicapped accessibility to polling sites, and to review progress toward making these improvements.
2. Consideration by Montgomery County officials of voting equipment that is state of the art and which allows for immediate recount in close elections.
3. Continued provision of training for all precinct workers with additional management training for precinct leaders.
4. Review of notification procedures in order to establish better ways to ensure that voters are aware of their new voting sites, the exact location of these sites, and handicapped access points at each site.
5. Better circulation of county-generated sample ballots in order to inform voters of candidates and issues on the ballot and ballot format.
6. Faster handling of voters on Election Day through such means as:
 - a. use of the most "alphabet agile" at the front sign-in tables;
 - b. active recruitment of younger poll workers, including college students;
 - c. direct access to voting lists through laptop computers;
 - d. more flexible procedures for line management; and
 - e. split shifts for poll workers rather than lengthy single shifts.

Solid Waste Management (c. 1975; restudy and update 1981; readopted and amended 2009)

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery endorses action to combat the problem of solid waste disposal in Montgomery County by supporting recycling efforts at all levels of government, waste reduction practices, public ownership of landfills, mandatory participation in county solid waste programs, monitoring compliance with Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) regulations; and educating the public with respect to solid waste issues.

The League supports action in the following areas:

Recycling -- Mandatory participation in city and country wide recycling programs, monetary incentives to promote participation ⁱⁿ these programs, and the creation of markets for recycled products by our local governments.

Waste Reduction -- Waste reduction practices (such as buying in bulk containers and avoiding disposable items) and the development of educational programs and materials to increase community awareness of the many ways we can reduce the amount of solid waste we generate.

Public Ownership of Landfills -- Continued public ownership of our landfills so that the public can retain ultimate control over tipping fees, selection of landfill users, and other issues confronting the landfills.

County Solid Waste Program -- Mandatory participation in a countywide solid waste pick-up program for Montgomery County, since present statistics reveal only a small percentage of the county population now participates in such a program.

Monitoring Committee -- Establishment of an independent local monitoring committee to ensure local governments' compliance with solid waste laws and regulations.

Regional Landfill -- Development of a regional landfill to reduce the number of landfills in our area thus reducing the number of potential environmental hazards, and providing a more cost effective method of complying with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations.

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery also believes environmental and economic conditions call for conservation of resources and energy. Broad-based, long term planning should be integrated into decision making on solid waste management. Solid waste management should be considered an integral part of efforts to conserve resources and energy. Curbside garbage collection should be integrated into such a plan.

Others cities have demonstrated that techniques such as recycling, bioconversion (recovering methane gas or changing organic waste into compost or feed), and different methods of applying heat to garbage can result in the recovery of energy and fuel. Some techniques can result not only in significant cost savings, but can actually generate revenue. While voluntarily recycling efforts are worthwhile, they have not achieved the results of municipally operated programs, which have a record of long-term, increasing benefits to their communities.

Education (1962, 1966; 1975; 1987; readopted and amended 2009)

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery supports a system of adequately financed free public schools. The League believes that school funding should come primarily from increased local property taxes with equalization of *ad valorem* taxes throughout Montgomery County. Capital needs should be met through the use of bond programs.

Attempts to get public support and referendum votes for increased funding should include the development of a survey of current school system conditions and development of a long term improvement plan. Both should be created with the assistance of outside experts and include significant citizen input and participation. Once finalized the results of the needs assessment and the long-term plan should be communicated to the public with the assistance of public relations advisors and community resources.

Quality education in Montgomery requires at minimum:

Upgrading of physical facilities. Part of the upgrading should include air conditioning and quality paint that can withstand repeated washings.

Requiring accreditation of all libraries and librarians as well as counselors and advisers, including occupational advisers and social workers.

Special education classes for gifted students.

Quality teachers receiving higher salaries.

Reduction in the number of students in the classroom, especially in elementary schools.

More teacher aides for every classroom.

Kindergarten as an integral part of all elementary schools.

School supplies paid for out of school funds.

Paper towels, soap, and toilet tissue provided in all washrooms from school funds.

Janitorial services paid for from school funds.

Provision of all textbooks and curriculum materials free except for breakage and replacement.

**Consolidation of City and County Services
(1952; 1955; 1965; readopted and amended 2009)**

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery supports continued evaluation by public officials of city-county services and offices to determine which services and offices could be combined in order to deliver services to the public more efficiently and effectively. If such combination is feasible, the services/office should then be combined. Examples of consolidation in place and supported by the League are the public school system, tax collection, city-county personnel board, city-county library system, and city-county elections.

Urban Redevelopment (1966; readopted and amended 2009)

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery supports urban redevelopment which prepares a workable program for utilizing private and public resources to eliminate and redevelop blighted areas. We further support continuing comprehensive planning, which provides for the growth of the city and the changing needs and health of its citizens.

Public Parks (c. 1968-1970; readopted and amended 2009)

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery believes that public parks should be recognized as an essential part of city life and supports the development of public parks for the City of Montgomery. The development and maintenance of parks that attract people of all ages enhances the quality of life of the citizenry, adds to the beauty of the city, and positively impacts the city's image.

**LWVM supports the positions adopted by the
League of Women Voters of the United States and the
League of Women Voters of Alabama.**

**Study Items for 2009-2010
Adopted May 20, 2009**

1. A study of the management and upkeep of cemeteries in the City of Montgomery and Montgomery County, including an examination of how perpetual care of the facilities can be required and enforced including the role of local governments.
2. Continuation of the local government study examining the governmental structure and operations of the City of Montgomery and County of Montgomery and how they do and might work together.