

## LWVGA Convention 2009

### State Recommended Program: Climate Change

#### **National Position**

Global climate change is one of the most serious threats to the environment, health and economy of our nation. Recent scientific studies show that global warming is already causing environmental changes that will have significant global economic and social impacts.

The League believes that now is the time to act on global climate change. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to cleaner technologies. Cities, states and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution, and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers exist.

To reinforce and expand on those efforts, the League urges federal action that reduces global warming pollutants on a national and global scale.

#### **Context**

- LWV has a national platform on climate change through the Climate Change Task Force
- LWVGA has not gotten involved in climate change policy to date
- The state board has decided that the program at the '09 convention will be on climate change
- Members are interested in climate change policy but don't have a strong knowledge and understanding about the drivers, issues and policy.
- Climate science shows that climate change is progressively worsening at alarming rates.
- National leadership embraces climate change as a major issue and will be passing significant policy in the Obama administration.
- The next round of international policy will be negotiated starting in December '09 in Copenhagen. We will see significantly more attention in the media b/c of this.
- The state of Georgia and major electric utility has taken action to prevent climate change policy.
- A few municipalities in Georgia have begun to address climate change (Athens, Savannah, Atlanta, Decatur, & Fulton Co.)

#### **Problem**

LWVGA has not developed a climate change platform at the state and local level.

#### **Intent**

To develop a climate change platform at the state and local level providing basic education on climate change as well as "here's what you can do" tips. Would be ideal to also target legislative outcomes.

#### **Desired Outcomes**

- A robust program on climate change for Convention
- State and local level policy and action to address climate change
- LWVGA members are educated about the current state of science, issues, and public policy associated with climate change
- LWVGA has a state specific climate change platform and lobbying plan
- Local leagues undertake climate change programs to educate and engage their members
- Partnerships with key stakeholders and groups
- Make the League a “go-to” organization on this issue
- Increase visibility for the League through reasonable conversation without creating a lightning rod

## **State Recommended Program: Independent Judiciary/Access Justice**

### **National Position**

The League of Women Voters' Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Promoting an Independent Judiciary program continues to be a successful nationwide education campaign effort. Our goal is to increase citizen understanding on the importance of our nation's system of separation of powers and highlight the vital need for protecting a fair and independent judiciary.

### **Context**

- Frequently, we, as citizens, are asked to make decisions and vote based on what we understand about the Judiciary branch of government.
- The League of Women Voters of Georgia has a history of focusing on the importance of a fair judiciary and campaign finance issues in judicial races.
- It has recently become obvious that the general population has difficulty grasping basic judiciary information, and seems to have a faltering understanding of what makes the Judicial Branch different from other branches of government. The roles that non-partisan elections, public judicial race financing, and recusal play in government and justice are often not understood by our populace.
- Unfortunately, information about the basic workings of our courts is often perceived to be out of reach or too complex. Many feel lost or confused by their interactions with the judiciary system and perceive it to be an exclusive system reserved only for those in the professional legal system.

### **Problem**

Without a fundamental understanding of the judiciary branch of government and the safeguards it provides, we lose faith in the equity of our checks and balances, and of justice. At the root of this problem is an apathetic and governmentally undereducated population.

### **Intent**

We believe that long-term change and judicial education must begin with Georgia's children. To do this, of course, we must alert parents, teachers, and government officials to the urgency of the dilemma, and inspire them to action.

### **Desired Outcomes**

- Help restore faith in the judiciary as an equitable, thoughtful, and balanced underpinning for our lives and governance.
- Instill a "second nature" comprehension of the role of the Judicial system and the courts in day to day life
- Give Georgia's students the information and tools they need to navigate our Judicial system as children and as adults
- Help the next generation gain the confidence and understanding they need to protect justice for all, including the young, the mentally ill, and the less fortunate.
- Partnerships with key stakeholders and groups
- Make the League a "go-to" organization on this issue
- Increase visibility for the League through reasonable conversation