

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
City Government	1993	<p>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.</p> <p>*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.</p> <p>*an elected City Controller who is independent of the Mayor and City Council.</p>	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Government	1993	<p>2. Support a City Council electoral structure that provides for:</p> <p>*members elected both at-large and by single-member districts.</p> <p>*a majority of the members elected from single-member districts</p>	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Government	1993	<p>3. Support a City Council of optimal size that is determined by criteria which insure:</p> <p>*representation of all citizens *accountability *accessibility</p> <p>*effectiveness</p> <p>*affordability</p>	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Government	1993	<p>4. Support of single-member district lines based substantially on population and which also:</p> <p>*ensure that minority rights are not diluted.</p> <p>*reflect geographic common sense.</p> <p>*maintain the integrity of neighborhoods.</p> <p>*create districts which are compact, contiguous, and continuous in shape.</p>	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
City Government	1993	5. Support 4-year terms for the offices of Mayor, Controller, and City Council with staggered terms for Council.	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Government	1993	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.	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Government	1993	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)	<p>History: The League last updated this position in the 1990's.</p> <p>Action: In 2010, the League monitored the task force named to look at term limits and make recommendations.</p> <p>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.</p>
City Charter	1974	Support a complete revision of the city charter of Houston.	

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
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.	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.
Financing City Government	1989	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	1975 / 1988	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.	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.

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Budget Process	1975 / 1988	<p>2. Specifically support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*a budget format that provides for budget controls and accountability and provides for analysis that reflects policy goals and directions;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*giving adequate notice of all proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making all public records accessible.</li> <li>*notice of all hearing dates.</li> <li>*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)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>Action: Much of what the League advocated has been achieved, and no action has been taken in recent years.</p>
Capital Improvement Budget	1988	Support the consideration of the capital improvement budget along with the operating budget.	
Libraries	1969	Support measures to insure adequate library facilities for Houston area residents, including merger of city and county systems and the regional library concept.	<p>History: When this study began in the late 1960's, libraries were few and of low quality. Library budgets were politically easy to cut.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Although merger of the city and county library systems has been politically impossible, the two systems do cooperate.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Annexation/Disannexation	1977 / 1979	<p>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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Checkerboard patterns should be avoided;</li> <li>*No unincorporated areas should be left surrounded by the city (except those within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of another city);</li> <li>*Houston should not pass over economically depressed areas as it proceeds with annexation;</li> <li>*Houston should plan annexation in advance in order to make sure that city departments are prepared for expanded services;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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)</li> </ul>	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.
Annexation/Disannexation	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)	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.
Annexation/Disannexation	1979	3. Support the adoption of a subdivision ordinance for the city and the ETJ. (1979)	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.
Annexation/Disannexation	1979	4. Support policies encouraging development within the city limits. (1979)	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.
Annexation/Disannexation	1979	5. Support a policy encouraging water districts to consist of a single parcel of land. (1979)	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.

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Annexation/Disannexation	1983	<p>6. Support a long-range policy of annexation and the adoption of a policy for annexation and disannexation to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*legal clarification of circumstances under which disannexation would be permitted;</li> <li>*a review board, preferably at the state level, to hear cases of disputed annexations and disannexations;</li> <li>*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)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
Comprehensive Planning	1976	<p>1. Support planning in Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*the development of goals and priorities for Harris County by assessing the needs of the total community with maximum public participation;</li> <li>*central planning coordination and implementation tools for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;</li> <li>*development of a uniform performance building code for the unincorporated areas of Harris County;</li> <li>*feasibility studies for the consolidation of planning services between municipalities and Harris County;</li> <li>*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)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
Comprehensive Planning	1976 / 1984	<p>2. Support the development and adoption of a long-range flexible, constantly updated, comprehensive plan, developed with adequate citizen input. This plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*the coordination and centralization of the planning process in Houston, with the strengthening of a central planning authority;</li> <li>*the development of goals, objectives, and priorities for Houston through a process which assures maximum public participation;</li> <li>*a broad-based planning commission with members with diverse backgrounds and expertise;</li> <li>*a comprehensive plan which includes economic, social, and environmental concerns as well as physical development;</li> <li>*public involvement in the planning process at the neighborhood level, and public hearings on proposed plans;</li> <li>*an explanation to the public by the City Council of why any given plan is or is not adopted; (1976)</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*the use of growth management techniques such as performance standards, impact fees, and both shortterm and long-term capital improvements budget planning;</li> <li>*a city ordinance requiring the setting aside of land for open space and parks. (1984)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Tax Abatement & TIRZ	2006	<p>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.</p> <p>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)</p>	<p>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.</p>
Ethics	2007	Support of effective ethics regulation with strong enforcement.	<p>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.</p>
Natural Resources - Parks and Recreation	1970	<p>Support measures to insure acquisition, maintenance, and development of public lands in the Houston area by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*comprehensive planning for public lands in Harris County to meet National Parks and Recreation Association standards;</li> <li>*adequate funding;</li> <li>*adoption of an objective priority planning policy;</li> <li>*investigation of legal ordinances to facilitate parkland acquisition and contribution of land and money by developers;</li> <li>*maximum cooperation and coordination of park services and planning between city and county;</li> <li>*maximum use of schools and churches for program development; *opposition to long-term private and public leasing of public lands. (1970)</li> </ul>	<p>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 &amp; Wildlife Department.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Natural Resources - Transportation	1971 / 1985	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	1978	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	1972	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.

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Toxic Substances	1983	<p>Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*regulating the transportation of toxic substances by:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. enforcement of safety, speed, and inspection regulations;</li> <li>2. establishment of realistic schedules, routes, and work practices to protect the public health;</li> <li>3. requirement of complete and informative labeling on the transporting vehicle, whether hazardous product or waste;</li> </ol> </li> <li>*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)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Building Codes in Coastal Areas		<p>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.</p>	
Administration of Justice - Social Policy	1975	<p>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)</p>	<p>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.</p>
Administration of Justice - Social Policy	1974	<p>Support measures for rehabilitation of offenders, which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*punishment or penalties which fit the crime;</li> <li>*more equitable punishment;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*provisions for pre-trial release such as are incorporated in the present (1974) Harris County Pretrial Release Program.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Bilingual Education	2000	<p>*Support educational legislation, policies, and programs that take into consideration the following:</p> <p>*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.</p> <p>*The basis on which the effectiveness of bilingual education should be determined are: 1. how quickly transition into English is made;</p> <p>2. standardized testing results of academic achievement, using valid data that can be confirmed.</p> <p>*Factors that negatively influence the academic achievement of LEP students are: 1. limited supply of qualified, committed teachers;</p> <p>2. high mobility of students' families;</p> <p>3. economic hardships;</p> <p>4. low educational expectations of the teachers, family, and the children. *The factors can be mitigated by:</p> <p>1. consistency of curriculum among school districts;</p> <p>2. adequate resources available from the Texas Education Agency;</p> <p>3. working with families and teachers to raise educational expectations;</p> <p>4. creating new avenues for recruiting additional teachers who are qualified and committed.</p> <p>*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.</p> <p>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.</p>	Action: No action has been taken in recent years.
Child Abuse and Neglect	1989	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.

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Domestic Violence	1983	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	1978	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)	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.
Education	1976	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.

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Health		<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Health		<p>2. Support joint planning and coordination to eliminate duplication and gaps in health services and to improve the availability and quality of care including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Centralized regional governance to pool resources and increase effectiveness;</li> <li>*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</li> <li>*Channels for consumer input into health planning.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
Health		<p>3. Support measures to control the escalation of health care costs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Increasing the insured population;</li> <li>*Accessing all available matching funds;</li> <li>*Utilization of local public and private funds to pay Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) premiums/Medicare Part B premiums for indigent elderly;</li> <li>*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;</li> <li>*Area-wide coordination of electronic health records including immunizations to be accessible by all health care facilities;</li> <li>*Area-wide coordination of highly specialized care involving expensive equipment; and</li> <li>*Utilization of para-professionals such as nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and dental hygienists.</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Housing	1971	<p>1. Support equal opportunities for all Houstonians with emphasis on additional well-managed, low-cost housing and continued support of existing positions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*a minimum housing code used in conjunction with existing building, fire, health, and sanitation codes;</li> <li>*adequate provisions for enforcing these codes, and any relocation of families necessary through such enforcement, to be the obligation of the city;</li> <li>*completion of a workable program for land use and housing for more orderly growth of the city, thus leading to qualification for federal assistance;</li> <li>*encouragement of private investment in low-cost housing and the use of private initiative to seek new ways of housing the needy. (1971)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Housing		<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Mandatory Homeowner Associations	2008	<p>The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area supports changes in Texas law governing mandatory homeowner associations which would provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Protection against foreclosure on homesteads.</li> <li>*Priority of payments so that assessment payments apply first to assessments and then to non-assessment items.</li> <li>*Secret ballots in homeowner elections.</li> <li>*Adequate safeguards against fraud to assure uniform, honest and accurate election results.</li> <li>*That the Texas Open Meetings Act and the Texas Open Records Act cover homeowner associations. (2008)</li> </ul>	
Sexuality Education and Reproductive Services	1982	<p>1. Support comprehensive sex education in all public schools in Harris County, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*greater parental involvement;</li> <li>*broadening curricula;</li> <li>*student access to specifically educated nurses, counselors, and teachers;</li> <li>*greater use of city and county educational programs;</li> <li>*programs to help parents open discussions with their children. (1982)</li> </ul>	<p>History: This position was adopted in 1982.</p> <p>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.</p>

Issue	Year	Comments	Additional Notes
Sexuality Education and Reproductive Services	1982	<p>2. Support adequate, easily accessible, publicly funded family planning services to meet the community's needs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*confidentiality of all clients;</li> <li>*efficient scheduling of family planning services; *advertising;</li> <li>*adequate funding;</li> <li>*adequate, accessible facilities. (1982)</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>
Sexuality Education and Reproductive Services	1982	<p>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)</p>	<p>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.</p>