



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO
MARCH 7, 2017 STATEHOUSE DAY



TAKE ACTION!

A keystone of LWV Ohio's annual Statehouse Day is to influence public policy through education and advocacy. LWV Ohio's Lobby Corps urges members to talk with your state legislators about the following topics. Please let us know how your conversations go by contacting us at lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org. Thank you for taking action!

1. Fair Districts – Support Congressional redistricting reform.

Despite voters' overwhelming passage of redistricting reform for state legislative districts in 2015, and our persistent lobbying, the legislature has refused to act on any of the Congressional fair districts reform proposals submitted in 2015 and 2016. We cannot wait indefinitely. Thus, in October 2016, the Fair Districts = Fair Elections Coalition put forward a reform proposal that could be placed before voters if the legislature doesn't act. We invited public comment on our proposal and have made improvements based on public input.

In early 2017, a reform proposal was once again introduced in the legislature, SJR 3. While we continue to support efforts to pass reform in the legislature, we will carefully scrutinize any proposal to ensure it includes the essential protections listed below. Until the legislature passes a proposal to put meaningful reform before voters, we will continue moving forward with a citizen initiative in order to make sure reform is enacted before the next time Congressional districts are redrawn.

If the legislature listens and finally acts on Fair Districts for Congress, what should reform include?

1. The process should be transparent and allow public input on proposed maps before a vote.
2. Bipartisan support must be required for a map to be enacted, with no mono-partisan "out," and should permit fair representation of voters from both parties.
3. No plan shall favor or disfavor a political party or candidate.
4. Use big building blocks like counties and cities to keep communities together and make districts more compact

The Fair Districts for Congress Too proposal – You can read our reform proposal at www.fairdistrictsohio.org.

2. Housing Trust Fund – Increase funding to meet growing need.

The Ohio Housing Trust Fund, long supported by the League, is a primary funding source for low and moderate income housing and homeless prevention programs. Housing needs, however, continue to outstrip funding and this year the "Home Matters to Ohio" campaign is asking for an additional \$15 million to increase support for emergency shelters, construction, rehab and repair, handicapped accessibility modifications, rental assistance and down payment assistance and financial counseling for formerly homeless families. Each trust fund dollar leverages more than \$9 in private and federal matching funds and generates nearly \$15 in overall economic activity for Ohio. Ask your legislators to support the additional funding to bring safe and stable housing to the more vulnerable residents in your community.

For more information, go to www.cohhio.org/home-matters-to-ohio/ or www.development.ohio.gov/cs_hf.

3. Health Care – Urge state legislators to protect Medicaid expansion, and urge your Members of Congress not to repeal the ACA without a replacement.

Urge your state legislators to preserve Ohio's Medicaid expansion in the current 2-year state budget. An analysis commissioned by the legislature found that by joining the Medicaid expansion 702,000 Ohioans gained coverage as of

May 2016 and 75% of them were previously uninsured. Ohio's Medicaid expansion has improved health and reduced financial hardship for thousands of Ohioans with chronic health conditions, and it has been a critical tool to helping Ohio address the opiate epidemic.

In Washington, D.C., Congress has taken the first steps to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in both the U.S. House and Senate. They are rushing to make major changes that will harm millions of Americans while throwing the U.S. health care system into disarray. The repeal of the ACA would jeopardize healthcare for nearly 1 million Ohioans, and women would be hit particularly hard by the loss of the healthcare law. Before the ACA, women regularly faced discrimination in the health care industry in coverage, in pricing, and in access to care. Repealing the ACA without an effective plan to replace it is unacceptable. **Stand with the League today and tell Congress that they cannot repeal the ACA without a comprehensive plan to ensure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans.**

4. Public education – protect funding for public schools and hold charter schools to the same accountability standards as traditional public schools.

LWVO supports continued efforts to secure a constitutional system for funding Ohio's public schools. Urge your Ohio legislators to amend the state budget bill (HB49) to increase the state per pupil amount to adjust for inflation and the cost of state mandates, maintain funding levels for transportation, and make adjustments to the foundation formula to ensure that it truly directs state aid to school districts with less capacity to provide a high quality education program, and reduce reliance on property taxes to fund schools.

The LWVO opposes taxpayer support for students attending private schools and increases in state aid for nonpublic school programs included in HB49. The League believes that public money should be spent only on public schools, which are accountable and responsive to the public through elected boards of education, and comply with standards that ensure a high quality education.

The LWVO urges lawmakers to hold charter schools accountable and responsive to taxpayers through elected boards of education. To strengthen accountability, the LWVO recommends eliminating for-profit charter management companies and requiring charter schools to comply with the same standards as traditional public schools, such as operating standards, teacher licensure standards, teacher evaluations, a required curriculum, etc. We also urge lawmakers to implement a transparent funding system for charter schools and eliminate funding them through a deduction from public school districts' state aid.

5. Local action needed! Urge local institutions to uphold gun-free zones.

In December 2016, the Ohio legislature passed a new law, often called the "guns everywhere" bill, that allows local institutions such as day care centers, preschools, college campuses, and some local government buildings to decide for themselves whether to allow or prohibit people to carry concealed handguns (CCW). Additionally, the bill is giving momentum for more school boards to authorize individual teachers and staff with CCW licenses to be armed in the k-12 schools without telling parents. Now, we must lobby locally to prevent guns around our kids.

ASK! ASK! ASK! IS THERE A GUN WHERE MY CHILD LEARNS?

DEMAND THAT K-12 School Boards AND College Trustees not allow CCW permit holders; employee or otherwise, to have guns in their schools or on college campuses.

TELL local businesses and daycare centers that you and your children do not want to be around a concealed loaded gun and that they **should post a "No Weapons"** sign to that effect.

For more information, visit www.ohioceasefire.org.