

2005-2006 Local Program Annual Meeting May 17, 2005

At the Annual Meeting, members voted to adopt a Program for the upcoming year. The Bylaws define the Medfield League's Program as consisting of "action to protect the right to vote of every citizen" and "those local governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action." (Art. IX, Sec. 2.)

Program consists of the existing local positions readopted by Annual Meeting (our League's "continuing responsibilities") plus any new issues for study. The League may take action (that is, act to influence public policy) on any continuing responsibility and on any new League position adopted by the Board after member study and agreement (typically reached by consensus). To help focus the League's activities, Annual Meeting may designate priority action items.

In determining whether to adopt a study, the League must consider the following:

- Does the League already have a position?
- Is there a government solution to the problem?
- Will the community look to the League for its position on the issue?
- Is there enough time to do a study and then act to influence the resolution of the problem?
- Will political realities permit effective action?
- Is this the appropriate level of the League to address this issue?

(Questions excerpted from "Empowering Citizens: A Guide to Influencing Public Policy," published by LWVUS in 1996.)

The Board of Directors recommends adoption of the continuing responsibilities, study and priority action item set forth below.

Continuing Responsibilities

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Medfield recommends the re-adoption of the following current positions as part of the Local Program.

Schools

1. Support an open-door policy that will encourage communication and understanding of problems and progress in education.

School Survey - April 1970, March 1971

2. Support of a METCO-type program as one acceptable way to counteract racial imbalance in the schools.

METCO - October 1972, update November 1975

3. Support and monitor comprehensive health education in the Medfield public schools, including specific support for adequate education on social competency, child safety, respect for differences, depression and suicide, and eating disorders and related issues of body image and self-esteem.

Health Education - February 1978

Health Curriculum - April 1997

4. To examine proposals by the School Committee dealing with school reorganization when

they are presented.

School Reorganization - November 1979

5. It is very important for Medfield to comply with both NEASC guidelines and the State Education Planning guidelines as regards the high school building. Compliance with the guidelines is essential to preserving the quality of the education offered by the Medfield High School and to maintaining the general reputation of the Medfield school system. Medfield High School should continue to offer comprehensive high school programs with emphasis on realistic goals and objectives for this community.

The League of Women Voters of Medfield also supports following the School Building Assistance Bureau's procedures, if economically feasible, so as to qualify the project for state reimbursement of 63% of the cost.

Medfield High School Building - February 1992

Town Government

1. Support under fiscal policy of the need for clearly understandable information of monies designated for school; the need for fiscal accountability of tax monies.

Fiscal Policy of Medfield - February 1972

2. Support for retaining the 250 quorum for both annual and special Town Meeting with emphasis being placed on reforming Town Meeting procedures in order to facilitate a more effective and efficient governmental process.

Quorum - November 1978

3. The League will make recommendations that certain areas of the Town Charter be examined by the Charter Review Committee and the League will explore any proposals for change.

Charter Review - April 1982

4. Support for the implementation of recorded capital expenditure plan for the town of Medfield.

Fiscal Policy - April 1982

5. Support for inter-department use of personnel within the town of Medfield.

Fiscal Policy - April 1982

6. Support the following Charter revision: The phrase "coordinate town boards and departments" should be added to the charter under the duties and responsibilities of the Town Administrator.

Fiscal Policy - Executive Secretary - November 1982

7. Support for a Geographic Information System (GIS) and a Town Planner for Town of Medfield.

GIS/Town Planner - April 1995

Other

1. Support for the Outreach Program of Medfield.

Juvenile Justice (State Study) - 1975

2. Support the update of the local study of the Medfield State Hospital land and facilities.

State Hospital Facility Use - 1977, 1978

3. Support the management and maintenance of conservation land.
Recreation and Conservation Land Use - 1981
4. Support informing the community about the location and uses of conservation land.
Recreation and Conservation Land Use -1981
5. Support for a fee-supported summer playground program.
Recreation and Conservation Land Use -1981
6. Support of increased fees for recreation programs.
Recreation and Conservation Land Use -1981
7. Support of long range planning for sidewalks in Medfield.
Sidewalks - April 1981
8. Encourage the planning board to consider pedestrian access when giving site plan approval to new business development.
Sidewalks - April 1981
9. Support a Pay-As-You-Throw Bag recycling system which reflects a cost evaluation and a community education program.

Board-Recommended Studies

No new study is recommended by the Board for the coming year. Instead, it is recommended that the membership participate in the Medfield LWV History Project. This will be a concerted effort to collect written and oral history of studies, projects, and activities of the Medfield LWV covering the 50-plus years of its existence. Then to organize and archive the information to be readily available for future use.

Non-Recommended Studies

The following studies were discussed but not pursued:

- Charter Commission Study – It was voted to issue a final report but take no further action at this time.
- Senior Tax Abatement – It was decided that there was little action that a municipality could implement and little interest among representatives of the senior to pursue.
- Fair Redistricting – It was decided not to take on a local study. It was recognized that the LWVMA had a committee working on this issue that local members could join.

State Program

The state continuing program was approved. The METCO program was discussed in terms of current relevancy. While no study was recommended, Kelly Kiel volunteered to put together a brief history of the program for general information and education.

One study/update was recommended: Update/upgrade state tax laws to reflect current service and technology economy and how to establish a more fair tax policy. It appears that a number of funding issues (education, senior real estate tax abatements, public funding for clean elections, etc.) could be addressed by an overall review and improvement to the state tax laws that are more fair, and potentially, generate more revenue.

There were four action issues recommended to LWVMA for consideration:

- Fair redistricting

- Fair Education Funding
- Clean Elections/Campaign Finance Reform
- Citizen Rights & Civil Liberties (Patriot Act)