



Positions in Brief for LWVChicago from Where We Stand 2015-2017

[http://lwvchicago.org/Where We Stand.html](http://lwvchicago.org/Where_We_Stand.html)

CABLE TV: Freedom of expression must be guaranteed. A minimum of public access channels and franchises must provide equal services. Subscriber privacy must be protected.

CITY BUDGET: The City should have a Municipal Budget Code and present expenditures by program in a line-item form, listing revenue from all sources. The budget making procedures should allow time for pre-budget hearings (to be held in neighborhoods as well as centrally), departmental hearings (with enough time for consideration of pre-budget hearing information as well as the departments – giving time to process amendments), public hearings with consideration of amendments (available in print) providing time for further hearings if needed before passage. The capital budget should be a separate item. Privatization of services should be considered if it will reduce costs/improve services in areas of specialized skills or when needed for rapid implementation of a pilot project. It should only be used if there are enough potential contractors to provide competition but should not be used to bypass labor unions or be at the expense of fair and safe working conditions or equal employment opportunities. Fringe benefits must be included.

CITY COUNCIL PROCEDURES: The council should meet regularly and be legislative not administrative. Council committees should be as few as possible, meet regularly with timely public advance notice of meetings. Testimony should be part of the permanent record. *The Journal of Proceedings of the City Council* should be available at least 48 hours before the next meeting, indexed with a summary of debate.

CITY COUNCIL STRUCTURE: Aldermen should be elected on a nonpartisan ballot from single member districts (wards); all 50 should be elected at the same time for four-year terms. Upon the resignation or declaration of vacancy in the position of an alderman for more than half of a term, an election shall be held. If feasible this election shall be combined with the next scheduled election.

CITY GOVERNMENT: LWVChicago favors the mayor-council form of government with non-partisan aldermen elected for a four-year term from each of the fifty (50) wards. The mayor should be elected on a partisan ballot for a four-year term and should be a policy maker with a chief administrator overseeing the department heads who shall be held responsible for their areas.

CITY PENSION FUNDS: The City of Chicago should have a greater voice in any changes made to the pension funds. Specifically, the city council should approve any changes in the pension plans before they can be enacted by the state legislature. The source of funding for the pension plans should not be restricted to the property tax, and the level of funding should more closely relate to actuarial requirements in order to reduce the unfunded liability to acceptable levels. The “acceptable” level of funding is defined as funding that meets the current year’s increase in accrued liability plus interest on the unfunded liability. In addition, the city should investigate the pros and cons of participation by city employees in the federal Social Security system

CITY PLANNING: There should be an agency to undertake long-range planning, including coordinated planning at the departmental level, intergovernmental planning, research data collection and evaluation, graphic services including map updating and maintenance, and public information

DISTRICTING: In election years immediately following a federal census, aldermanic elections should not be held until ward boundaries are redrawn in conformity with population figures, to avoid having a four-year term with districts not representative of the population.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR: The mayor should be freed for policy-making by assistants who coordinate the city’s departments and agencies.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT: A Department of Housing and Neighborhood (Community) Development should administer community development and housing subsidy funds and coordinate services of other departments relating to housing and neighborhood improvement

LIVING WAGE: All publicly funded projects should provide a living wage.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUE: The present tax system is inadequate. We support General Revenue Sharing and aid to distressed cities. LWVIL supports equitable distribution of tax burden to relieve property taxes (improving assessment procedures) and a reduction of sales tax (on food and medicine). LWVChicago rejects gambling, specifically casino gambling, as a source of revenue.

CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY: The system should provide resources and services to meet the educational, research, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of all Chicago residents. An adequate budget must be available with an increase in property taxes and other public and private resources. There should be a complete central library in one location. Branch libraries should meet the needs of the community and cooperate with neighborhood schools providing outreach to those who need it. Community participation in library decision-making must be available.

EDUCATION: We support universal compulsory education within the mandatory age (5-18) and increased funding.

CHARTER SCHOOLS: The League of Women Voters of Chicago supports a moratorium on new charter schools and networks, additional charter campuses within an existing network and new contract schools under the Chicago Board of Education until there is accountability and transparency in the finances and operations of these schools

DESEGREGATION: The Chicago League supports magnet schools and programs with busing as a way to make quality education available to all. Housing pattern changes are needed to meet a long-range goal of neighborhood integration. Human relations training must be available. Adequate facilities with maintenance, rehabilitation and construction are needed to meet the needs of the students with an understanding of the fiscal arrangements for such work.

FACILITIES AND REHABILITATION: Plans, criteria and priorities must be compatible with desegregation, equal opportunities, preservation of housing and quality of education and they must be made public. Decision-making must include local and district councils and instructional staff. Innovative buildings must be staffed with trained personnel in advance of opening.

LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCILS should have some authority over discretionary funds, student code of conduct and school improvement plan as well as advisory roles in hiring and firing of principal and teachers, preparation of the lump-sum budget and textbook selection. Parents, students and teachers should participate in policy determining supplemental curriculum with the principal having authority to select teachers, prepare the budget and use discretionary funds as approved by the LSC. Principals should be subject to performance review by the LSC.

PRINCIPALS: Principals should select their teachers and staff, prepare a school budget and have use of the discretionary fund as approved by the local school council.

QUALITY AND EQUALITY: There should be improved facilities, programs and policies and innovative plans to provide quality and equality of educational opportunities, including integration of students and faculties. We support teacher certification and assignment, transfer and tenure policies flexible enough to allow faculty integration and encourage innovative instruction, thus ensuring qualified dedicated teachers. Physically and psychologically positive environments should exist with effective pupil-teacher ratios.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: The League of Women Voters of Chicago believes that the Chicago Board of Education should be structured to be accountable, transparent and provide effective oversight and meaningful community engagement. The League of Women Voters of Chicago believes that whatever method is chosen to select the members of the Chicago Board of

Education, there are secondary issues that should be addressed. Administration should be as decentralized as possible.

CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO: The League's longstanding concerns with public education include monitoring the legislatively mandated missions of the City Colleges of Chicago to include consideration of how adequately and equitably funding resources are allocated. City Colleges shall cooperate with the Chicago Board of Education, business and industry to develop internship and other cooperative programs wherever feasible. Until such time as City College students no longer need remedial courses, such courses should be the responsibility of the City Colleges.

HANDGUNS: LWVChicago supports a ban on further manufacture, sale, transportation and importation for private ownership of handguns and their parts, along with registration. Licensing and permits should include handgun education.

HOUSING: There should be an agency to undertake long range planning with Housing and Neighborhood Development administering and coordinating neighborhood services. LWVChicago supports open housing policies with a city commission to investigate and initiate complaints with recourse to the courts should conciliation and mediation fail. *Multi-family housing:* LWVChicago supports exemptions for multi-family rental housing targeted to building and tenants in particular trouble. *Condominiums:* Strong tenant and consumer protective measures should be included. The city should actively seek funding for displaced tenants to help eliminate homelessness. The city should guarantee and facilitate low-interest partnerships to create multi-family, mixed-income rental units, utilizing Federal help. Where possible, developers should be required to set aside low-income units as a condition for doing business.

LAND USE: *The lakefront* should be used for public recreation only, enhancing its natural beauty, opposing an airport in the lake. *Parks* should be used for public recreation only, keeping buildings to a minimum, with equitable distribution of funds for maintenance and development. *Sports stadium:* No public funds should be used to support construction or operation of a sports complex.