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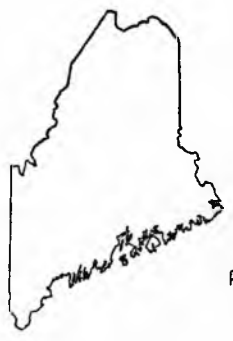
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RE-FILE



The MAINE VOTER

Published by The League of Women Voters of Maine

VOL. XIX

JULY, 1971

Number 1

STATE PROGRAM 1971-1973

Adopted at Convention, May 19, 1971

1. Support of the principle of a state income tax, both personal and corporate, and further study of the tax structure as it pertains to Maine.
2. Study and support of state policies and procedures which promote comprehensive long-range planning for conservation and development of environmental resources: air, water, land.
3. Evaluation of structures and functions of state government with continued study and support of measures to improve the Maine constitution.

from the
President's Desk

Dear Leaguers of Summertime Maine:

Every first vice-president has nightmares about "performing all the duties" of the President "in the event of her disability," as the bylaws put it. When Willabelle Zabel suffered a heart attack two weeks before Convention, I found myself in charge prematurely. "She brought to the League," said Sukey Allen in a convention tribute to Willabelle, "a sunny disposition that defied her getting down in the dumps over any problem." At this writing, I'm happy to report that the patient recovered in such leaps and bounds that she is off on a camping trip with her husband, probably doing some League research on environment on the side. In preparation now is a Membership Quiz dedicated to Willabelle since it was through her interest in membership growth that the **League of Women Voters of Maine Facts** was published.

CONVENTION REPORT

Despite my abject terror, Convention proceeded like clockwork thanks to Mardie Wheeler, Convention Chairman, and her corps of near-professionals. Auburn's Holiday Inn reverberated with ringing speeches and hummed with League bustle. Excitement flared when a non-recommended item, study of abortion laws in Maine, was voted consideration on May 18 after Silver Leamon, of Lewiston-Auburn Area League made a persuasive case for its adoption. Next morning, however, the item was decisively defeated, along with the new proposed study of mental health facilities. The mood was definitely for more manageable program.

Delegates were quite specific in giving directions for the adopted program items. The question of whether we should have a further tax study brought spirited debate by Conven-

tion delegates, who placed top priority on fighting the repeal of the income tax in the fall referendum. The decision was that attention must be paid to the total tax picture, a study which should be forthcoming in the 1972-73 League year. Environmental study will take two new directions, toward land use in the fall, and solid waste disposal in the spring—the latter hopefully to tie in with national consideration. The Constitution item will be non-expandable next year—an action item only. Interest remains high in a state government booklet. (At this time, reorganization bills have passed the Legislature, but the structure of the new departments will remain fluid during a transition period.)

And who ever said bylaws are dull? Convention deliberation on bylaws took a dramatic turn when delegates turned over a proposed change in the Maine League fiscal year and board office-taking date (from April 1 to July 1). The change was to reflect action at National Convention last year, but when our delegates learned that National Council had voted to recommend that the next National Convention rescind the changes, they voted down our own similar amendments.

We did lower the membership and board qualification age to **eighteen**, and added **protection of the right to vote of every citizen** as a responsibility implicit in League program and principle. We officially adopted single listing of our agenda (no more CA-CR dichotomy), and shortened the **two-month** period of consideration by Local Boards of program and by-law amendments proposed by State Board, to **six weeks** prior to Convention. From now on, adoption of non-recommended items at State Convention will be easier, thanks to the bylaw amendment changing the necessary vote from **2/3** to a **majority**.

It turned out to be a very lively Convention despite—no, probably because of the do-or die atmosphere created by the income tax challenge. Leaguers seemed cheerfully resigned to disciplining minds and hearts to the task at hand—defeating the tax referendum. Let's do it, year-round Leaguers!

Nancy N. Masterton, President

How Does The Maine League Measure Up?

Vice President from National LWV Visits Maine

League leaders from the State Board and local Leagues had the opportunity to draw on the expertise and experience of Mrs. Gail Bradley, first Vice President of the League of Women Voters of the U. S. during her three day visit to Maine in June. At least sixty old and new Board members exchanged views, explored mutual League concerns, and tested their ideas against Mrs. Bradley's national perspective at the workshops held in Bangor and Portland.

League action was a topic of great interest to workshop participants. Mrs. Bradley described the operation of the national Lobby Corps whereby League members who live in and around Washington are trained to follow up local League contacts with Congressmen. The aim of action on all League levels should be to persuade as many people as possible to join in putting pressure on the proper governmental body to choose a course of action recommended by the League. Action campaigns should be well-planned, based on realistic priorities, and involve other interested groups in a coalition when possible.

When Mrs. Bradley was asked how she thought the Maine League "measured up" to other Leagues, she replied that a real evaluation was not possible but at the national office the Maine League has a reputation for being knowledgeable, responsible and active; a good solid League that knows what it is doing. In further exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the Maine League during her visit, Mrs. Bradley seemed to feel that our greatest liability was "geographical scatter," too few Leagues and League members scattered over too large a geographical area to be truly effective. On the other hand, she commented that our greatest asset was "the bright and young local Board members who came to the workshops."

Mrs. Bradley's visit was aimed at increasing the knowledge and involvement of the Maine League's new local and state leaders. Their challenge now is to find creative answers to our problem of geographical scatter.

League To Work With Coalition Group

The State Board is working with a state coalition group called FAIR (Fight Against Income Tax Repeal) organized to fight the repeal of the income tax. FAIR will be using the media extensively, providing speakers, and supplying materials to those joining in the campaign to retain the state income tax. They plan to peak their activities in early fall before the November 2 referendum. Below are some suggestions for those League members who want to begin their activity now.

- Volunteer to work with your local tax chairman
- Concentrate on getting new voters involved in the action you are taking, especially the 18 year old voter
- Utilize non-League members in your community to help educate those who oppose the income tax
- Inform your tax chairman of any action by the repeal group so that she may plan counter-action
- Share your creative ideas with other Leagues by mailing them to the State Tax Chairman

Legislative Wrap-Up

The League was extremely busy this past year testifying for and against various kinds of legislation. Here is a recap of our successes and failures:

Human Resources: A Housing Code bill died early and Holding Rent in Escrow failed in the House. Postponed were local welfare reforms, scholarships for Indians and guaranteed loans for Indian housing. Three bills were signed to protect tenants and landlords and bills for school committees for two Indian reservations were enacted. The creation of a Human Rights Commission to hear cases of discrimination was an important achievement.

Environment: Two measures that we opposed, exempting power plants from EIC control and the effluent charge for polluters, were killed. Bills for protection of coastal wetlands, prohibition of pesticides in waterways, an advisory board for the Saco River and the inclusion of \$350 thousand for the EIC in the supplemental budget (\$2 million was requested) were passed.

State Government: Annual Sessions, Reduction of House and Abolition of Executive Council, are as yet unattainable. Although the League-supported State Government Internship Program failed to materialize, money was appropriated (\$60,000) to hire five professional staff members. House Apportionment ran into constitutionality questions and was postponed until special session.

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