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Maine League of Women Voters

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The MAINE VOTER

Published by The League of Women Voters of Maine
P. O. Box 151, Orono, Maine 04473

VOL. XVIII

JANUARY, 1971

Number 4

Maine League Legis-Letter

Dear Legislator:

This issue of our membership publication is dedicated to you. For those of you unacquainted with the League, it will be an introduction to us and to our legislative program. For others of you it will be a review, although there are new aspects to our program with which you will want to become acquainted.

The League of Women Voters of Maine is a non-partisan volunteer organization numbering about 700 women 18 years of age and older. The Maine League comprises eight local Leagues in Bangor, Brunswick, Houlton, Lewiston-Auburn Area, Mt. Desert Island, Orono, Portland Area and South

Portland. Our purpose is to work towards better government on local, state and federal levels through objective study of issues selected by our members. When consensus on these issues emerges after discussion, the League commits itself to legislative action.

Like you, we are interested in our state government from the citizen's point of view. We have listed below the Maine League programs on which we will be seeking the support of the 105th Legislature. We welcome your interest and comments on our program. With best wishes for an effective and productive legislative session.

Mrs. Lowell W. Zabel, President

Legislative Goals

CONSTITUTION—STATE GOVERNMENT

Strengthening the Legislature: Since 1968 the League has supported the concept of a **unicameral legislature** for Maine because of its practicality for a state of our population, and its tendency to make more visible both the legislator and legislative procedure to the average citizen. With a smaller legislature, Maine could then afford to provide higher pay for legislators, more office space, and the clerical and research services needed in a modern legislature.

Unicameralism is a long-range goal for the League. Until the idea becomes acceptable, we will continue to work towards strengthening the present bicameral legislature in the following ways:

1. **Four-year staggered terms for Senators** to assure continuity of experience and encourage the long-range view in the Senate, balancing the "grass-roots" view of the House.
2. **Reduction in the size of the House** to approximately 100, to increase efficiency and make possible higher salaries, expanded facilities and increased legislative services.
3. **Reapportionment of the House** into single-member districts, 3 to each Senatorial district, based on equal populations as determined by Federal Census figures. County lines should be preserved whenever possible, and districts should be compact.
4. **Constitutional provision for annual legislative sessions**, to insure a yearly regular legislative response to governmental needs, to expedite state budgeting and fiscal control, and to take better advantage of federal programs. Special sessions called by the Governor should be retained.

Strengthening the Executive: Since 1965 the League has supported **abolition of the Executive Council**, with confirma-

tion of judges and major department heads to be assigned to the Maine Senate, and other Council functions to administrative departments of state government.

The reason for our opposition to the Executive Council is that it has been stripped of many of its original functions and those that remain can be performed by other governmental agencies. Meanwhile, the Council weakens executive power while not adequately protecting legislative interest. The legislature, the League feels, would protect its interest better by convening annually, and abolishing the Council.

In Progress: Study on Legislative Staffing: In November, 1970, the League began a study on legislative staffing—what the specific needs are. A paper on the subject has been prepared for League use and is available on request from the LWV of Maine, P.O. Box 151, Orono, 04473.

The paper reviews the staff which presently serves the legislature: administrative (Clerk of House and Secretary of the Senate and staffs); secretarial service, fiscal services (Legislative Finance Office and State Auditor); legal counsel (Attorney-General's Office); legislative research (Legislative Research Office); and legislative reference (Law Library). Facts and opinions were gathered from staff members and legislative leaders. Consideration is being given to the desirability of reducing legislative joint standing committees in number, providing staff for at least some committees. The possibility of expanding the present intern program into the legislative branch is also being explored.

We hope for an early consensus on the study. In the meantime, we urge the cooperation of every member of the 105th Legislature in returning the questionnaire regarding legislative staffing, which is included with their copy of this VOTER, so that the League has a more complete idea of what legislators feel they need for additional services.

Nancy N. Masterton
Constitution—State Government

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

In water legislation, support of measures to strengthen the Environmental Improvement Commission as well as

- planning for water resource development
- management on a regional basis
- state financing of water development with cost sharing by federal and local government
- citizen participation in water resource decisions
- procedures that supply information and encourage intelligent weighing of alternative plans.

Also, the Maine League will be in support of legislation to prevent the damaging of the environmental quality of the state of Maine, including coastal waters, by uncontrolled industrial development with specific support of

- state zoning regulations for oil storage, depots, refineries and other oil related industries, set prior to their establishment
- state requirement of evidence of fiscal responsibility and commitment to environmental protection.

In air legislation, support of the following:

- management of Maine's air on a regional basis
- a strong central agency in charge of environmental improvement
- adequate financing and staff for this agency
- measures which will hold industries, communities and individuals responsible for the wastes they create
- means for more research on the effects of air pollution and ways of control
- study and action on the problem of solid waste disposal
- encouragement of non-polluting commercial development in Maine
- citizen participation in air resources decisions

Support the following amendments to strengthen Maine's Air Law:

- air quality and emission standards set by the EIC remain in effect as law if not approved by the legislature
- licenses granted by the EIC be for a specified time and subject to renewal
- the cost of pursuing violators be paid by the convicted
- industries be required to have adequate monitoring of their air emissions, with results reported to the EIC and available to the public
- in granting a variance the emissions involved must not damage plant or animal life
- the EIC be allowed to spot check industries without warning
- air pollution be a civil as well as a criminal offense, allowing the state to sue for damages
- the EIC have sufficient counsel assigned directly to it.

Also, support of an addition to Title 29, s. 2127, requiring that anti-smog devices (on those cars on which they are standard equipment) be in good repair in order to get an inspection sticker.

TWO NEW ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE DECISIONS ANNOUNCED

Maine Leagues have concluded studies on the concept of effluent charges as a means of managing Maine's water

resources, although agreement among local Leagues was not obvious. State Board members gave considerable study to the consensus reports in order to state accurately the final opinion. The conclusion reached by the Board at its January meeting reads, "The LWV of Maine after studying effluent charges has concluded that although such charges might be useful in Maine water resources management, there was no substantial agreement that effluent charges should be adopted at this time."

Also during the Fall months local Leagues had to reach consensus on Pesticides. This time agreement was clear cut and the Board adopted the following position:

"The LWV of Maine supports a pesticide control program which includes education; research; strong regulations; strict enforcement. At this time, January 1971, the LWV of Maine urges the adoption of:

- regulations and enforcement procedures extended to ALL users of pesticides
- increased funding and staffing for the agency in charge of pesticide control
- registration of pesticide sales
- improved labeling on pesticide containers
- more research, education and opportunity for experimentation and application of alternative methods of pest control in Maine."

HUMAN RESOURCES

In the area of our Human Resources item, the 105th offers a challenging arena for furthering League position. Legislation for the establishment of a Human Rights Commission, though twice defeated, stands a good chance of passage in this session and is strongly supported by the League. Several bills in regard to tenant-landlord relationship will be presented. One of these pertains to Implied Warranty of Habitability in leased dwellings, another to Forcible Entry by landlords, and a third to the Responsibility and Duties of Landlords and Tenants. Other legislation relating to housing may be presented and HR chairmen will be kept informed. Legislation in regard to Indians will include: 1) a bill to establish a state-supported scholarship fund for Indians; 2) enabling legislation for the establishment of elected school boards for Indian Island and Pleasant Point; and appropriation of funds for the completion of the elementary school at Peter Dana Point. Legislators should be interviewed as to their position on these and other bills related to our national human resources positions.

INCOME TAX

After vigorously supporting the passage of the 1969 personal and corporate income tax, we continue to support the principle of this broad-based tax. If opponents of the tax are successful in seeking a referendum in November, the Maine League will join the fight to educate our citizens on the need to support the income tax.

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Governor Curtis has accepted our invitation to the **Legislative Luncheon** at the South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta on January 27. Party leaders in the Senate and House, chairmen of key committees and state Board members and delegates from local Leagues will attend.

League Day at the Legislature is planned for March 18. We invite every member to come and see the legislative process in action, meet your representative, and tour the State House—it will give you that feeling of being on the inside of the legislative process.

In between times, all League members will be watching for hearings on those bills we may support or oppose. This is League action at the top—on the ground level is the member's influence with her representatives.

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