

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

LWVUS– Adopted 2022

The League of Women Voters supports a criminal justice system that is just, effective, equitable, transparent, and that fosters public trust at all stages, including policing practices, pre-trial procedures, sentencing, incarceration, and re-entry; the elimination of systemic bias, including the disproportionate policing and incarceration of marginalized communities; policing practices that promote safety for both law enforcement officers and the communities they serve; collaboration between government and community throughout every stage of the criminal justice system; a focus on humane treatment and rehabilitation with the goal of promoting the successful reentry into communities of those who have been incarcerated; and reliance on evidence-based research in decision-making about law-enforcement programs and policies (including scheduled, periodic audits of program and policy effectiveness).

Support abolition of the death penalty.

LWVCO

Support of non-partisan selection of judges on an appointive-retentive basis; measures which facilitate efficient administration of justice rather than incarceration for nonviolent offenders; sentencing measures that protect the community, compensate victims and the community for the crimes of adult offenders, rehabilitate offenders, and emphasize the use of community-based sanctions.

LWVD position on Criminal Justice – Adopted 1971

Support for measures which will improve the selection and preparation of law enforcement officers and which will improve police-community relations; more efficient methods for handling caseload in the Denver county court system; programs which lead to better rehabilitation of offenders; ways which ameliorate the drug problems in Denver

ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. There should be dialogue between police and communities served.
2. A valid psychological testing device should be used to identify officers who will serve all the citizens of Denver equally.
3. Adequate training and education includes job definitions, quality human relations training, and ongoing in-service training. We support the enlargement of Metro State College to serve all who want to take the law enforcement courses of study.
4. The Internal Affairs Bureau of the Denver Police Department should provide for citizens' input and be made more accountable to the public.

ON THE COURTS

1.To reduce the volume in the Denver County Court system, we support:

- a. Small claims court
- b. Decriminalization of some charges
- c. Pretrial conferences
- d. Increased facilities and personnel

2.As a less-time-consuming, more-efficient, less-costly method of handling traffic cases, we support satellite courts.

3.To promote defendants' welfare, we support

- a. Increased use of personal recognizance bonds for the first offender
- b. Speedy trial
- c. Sentencing to fit the offender – not the offense
- d. Concerted effort to apply effective rehabilitation methods

ON CORRECTIONS

1.We support dealing with Denver's drug and alcohol problem by:

- a. Continued funding for existing programs that are proving effective.
- b. Working for basic changes in society to discourage the indiscriminate use of drugs to alleviate everyday problems.
- c. Encouraging drug and alcohol education for our entire society.
- d. Emphasizing treatment of alcoholism and drug use as medical problems.
- e. Encouraging increased use of public tax dollars and increased private volunteer programs in Denver

2.We support selective use of community-based correctional facilities, located in residential neighborhoods with access to recreation and transportation, as an alternative to imprisonment.

ON MUNICIPAL JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Support for a municipal juvenile justice system which emphasizes meeting the needs of juveniles, while recognizing the community's need for protection; includes a separate municipal court; is fair and impartial; is staffed by personnel trained to deal with juveniles; is adequately funded; is accountable and efficient; and provides programs appropriate to the offense, which stress counseling, restitution, and diversion over detention (2000)

ON STANDARDS ON MUNICIPAL JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- 1. Meeting the needs of juveniles – juvenile need:
 - a. Assessment as soon as possible

- b. Prompt scheduling for their court appearance and follow-up
 - c. A variety of appropriate services and programs
 - d. The involvement of parents, schools, neighborhood organizations and businesses
 - e. Prompt consequences that hold juveniles accountable for their actions, including failure to comply
- 2. Meeting the needs of the community – the community needs:
- 3.
 - a. Protection for persons and property
 - b. Restitution as appropriate
 - c. Reassurance that youthful offenders will be held accountable for their unlawful behavior
- 4. A municipal juvenile court should:
- 5.
 - a. Be separate to deal with municipal offenses and to allow for early intervention with juvenile offenders.
 - b. Have a presiding judge who is familiar with multitude of programs and facilities that serve youthful offender.
 - 1. Have on-going communications with service providers
 - 2. Have an on-going liaison with Denver Public School.
 - c. A system that is fair and impartial
- ~~4. Does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, gender or sexual preference~~
- ~~5. Does not exclude poor people from services and programs because of cost~~
- 6. Provides access to competent counsel
- 7. Training of staff – everyone in the juvenile justice system (including police officers, judges, counselors, and others having professional contact with juvenile offenders) should:
 - a. Be adequately trained, including some formal knowledge of child and adolescent development
 - b. Be trained in communication skills
 - c. Have sufficient familiarity with the symptoms of juvenile problems to recognize when evaluation by a medical or mental health professional is needed
 - d. Update these skills on a regular basis
- 8. A system that is adequately funded, accountable and efficient should:
 - a. Receive sufficient funding to ensure high quality of programs, services, staffing and administration.
 - b. Receive sufficient funding to ensure that needed services and programs are available to all juvenile offenders.
 - c. Provide for an on-going record-keeping that will allow for tracking of all juveniles going through the system and ensure that statistics are accurate and available for assessment of programs.
 - d. Evaluate all its programs and services on a regular basis.
- 9. Programs and services should be:
 - a. Appropriate to the specific offense and the individual needs of the offender
 - b. Sufficiently varied so that all offenders can receive what they need while they are in

the system Age of offender, type of crime and number of offenses should be considered in placement.

- c. Small-sized facilities are recommended.
- d. There must be adequate training and supervision by competent people.
- e. Education of the community is necessary.