

**Elder Caregiving Study
Discussion and Consensus Questions
League of Women Voters of Washington**

Local League name:

Date of Local League Board Meeting:

Number of members participating in consensus meetings:

Total membership in your League:

Name of person reporting on behalf of your League:

Phone number of reporting member named above

E-mail of reporting member:

Methods used to solicit members' views (check all that apply):

- Unit meetings
- General meeting
- Other:

Consensus is member agreement reached after study and discussion. It is not a simple majority, nor is it necessarily unanimity; rather it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. Consensus is not a vote or a poll. However, a show of hands may be used to determine the sense of the group. Local League boards will submit a single consensus statement to LWVWA that captures the responses to the consensus questions from members.

While the responses to the consensus questions are the basis for League positions, consensus may arise from the discussion questions as well. Noting major issues raised by the discussion questions is optional but can be helpful to the process. Do record comments related to the consensus questions. This information will be used to draft a LWVWA position or positions.

Discussion and Consensus Questions

1. **Elders** - Demographic projections indicate that Washington state is part of a long-term global and national trend in the increase of elders as a proportion of the population. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. (*pages 8-13 of the report*)

Discussion Question 1: Given projections about increases in the number of elders requiring caregiving, what are your concerns about future caregiving needs?
Comments

Consensus Question 1: Should the League support enhancements and increased funding for home and community-based services and systems to keep elders in their homes as long as possible? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

High priority; Low priority; Not a priority; No consensus

- 2. Information and Planning** - Elders and their families often find themselves needing to explore alternatives and develop caregiving plans during crisis. (*pages 3-5, 8-11, 24-30*)

Discussion Question 2: How important are public and private efforts to educate Washington state residents about the need to prepare for their later years including early retirement planning and savings, preventive medicine, fall prevention, and long-term care insurance? *Comments*

Consensus Questions 2a and 2b:

- 2a.** Should the League support state and local outreach efforts to connect individuals and families with information and referrals regarding elder caregiving services and assistance? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

High priority; Low priority; Not a priority; No consensus

- 2b.** To what extent should the League support state and local planning/legislation for healthy aging, including coordination across government programs, partnerships with business, and appropriate community infrastructure, (e.g., accessible transportation, housing, health care, and nutrition)? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

Highly important; Somewhat important; Not important; No consensus

- 3. Family Caregivers.** Washington is a national leader in prioritizing home-based care for elders. The state estimates it saved nearly \$5 billion from 1999-2020 by focusing on home-based care rather than nursing homes. Unpaid caregivers provide 80% of the care needed by family members and friends which is equivalent to \$17 billion if this care were paid for. (pages 15-17, 22-24)

Discussion Question 3: What is your experience with caregiving for a vulnerable elder or elders? *Comments*

Consensus Questions 3a and 3b:

- 3a.** Should the League support funding for programs such as family leave, tax credits and respite care for family caregivers who care for elders in their own homes? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

High priority; Low priority; Not a priority; No consensus

- 3b.** How important is it that the League support efforts to improve access to affordable, readily available and culturally appropriate respite care for elders and family caregivers? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

Highly important; Somewhat important; Not important; No consensus

- 4. Paid Caregivers.** Inadequate numbers of professional (paid) caregivers to meet current and projected elder caregiving needs is a serious challenge expected to worsen over the next few years and decades as the population ages. Estimates are that by 2030, the ratio of elders 75 and over to people 25-54 years will be 1:4; by 2040, the ratio will be 1:3. (Pages 6-7, 8, 18-21)

Consensus Questions 4a-4c:

- 4a.** How concerned are you about improving working conditions, wages, benefits, and stability of employment for paid caregivers? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

Highly concerned; Moderately concerned; Not concerned; No consensus

4b. How important is it to reduce barriers to caregiver recruitment and retention including lack of readily available training and certification, transportation, affordable housing and child care? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

Highly important; Somewhat important; Not important; No consensus

4c. Should the League support innovative approaches to caregiver education and training including a career ladder that extends from high school through professional degrees? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

High priority; Low priority; Not a priority; No consensus

5. Affordability of Care. Affordability of care is of particular concern to working-class and middle-income elders and their families. (pages 23-27)

Discussion Question 5: Washington's emphasis on home-based care for vulnerable elders has been accompanied by Medicaid Estate Recovery and community spousal resource allowances that are less generous than federal requirements. To what extent should Washington state be concerned about the effects of these policies on intergenerational poverty reduction? *Comments below*

Consensus Question 5: Should the League support aligning Washington's Medicaid Estate Recovery and community spousal resource allowances with those required by Federal Medicaid law and regulations? *Comments. Indicate local League rating below*

High priority; Low priority; Not a priority; No consensus