

FACTORS WHICH GUIDED TO STATE BOARD TO VOTE TO SUPPORT THE BALLOT PROPOSAL

The decision was made by the Board for the organization as a whole. In other words, we had to consider the effect of the decision on the League's positions, aim and goals based on what was perceived to be in the best interests of the league as a whole and not based on the interests of particular groups. Individual members, of course, are free to make the decision to support or oppose the ballot proposal as they see fit. We only ask that, when speaking for the League, members either state the League position.

These are some of the factors which guided the state board to vote to support the ballot proposal.

--history of inability to achieve basic goals through legislature.

The LWNYS has been fighting for basic election, government and ethics reforms and protection of women's reproductive rights for decades. Despite these efforts, and occasional impetus from some few elected officials, these basic goals remain unachieved:

- Reasonable campaign limits
- Public financing of campaigns
- Strong ethic laws and enforcement
- No fault absentee voting
- Early voting

It is naïve to think that the state legislators will, through legislative action, act to upset the system by which they were elected and pass these reforms. History bears this out. At a constitutional convention, true reform has the chance to be realized.

--position of LWNYS as instrument of evolution

As we celebrate our 100 year history, it is important that we look forward to continued advocacy and leadership in the twenty first century. This leadership must respond to the changing needs of the citizens of NYS. To hesitate to support a method by which we can take a giant step toward a more modern and responsive government out of fear that our elected delegates will recommend and our voters will pass changes which do not comport with our positions and goals is contrary to our mission as an organization.

--safeguards on reformation of the constitution to remove clauses favored by the voters.

Any changes to the NYS Constitution have to be recommended by the delegates who have been elected by the voters and then approved by the voters. Delegates will run in open elections, during which their positions on the issues likely to be addressed at the convention will be exposed. Past conventions have resulted in the addition of more protections for voters, not in withdrawal of rights already protected. Should the delegates vote to recommend amendments or additions to the constitution which are not in conformity with the values of the electorate, the voters will vote no when these proposals appear on the ballot. Consideration of these safeguards overcame reluctance to take a chance on a process which could result in unwanted changes to the constitution.