

**League of Women Voters of Okaloosa County (LWVOC)
Local Positions and Program**

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Continue to study the availability of affordable housing in Okaloosa County for low-income groups.

YELLOW RIVER DAM AND RESERVOIR (first adopted 2002)

Monitor developments in the proposal to erect a dam and reservoir on the Yellow River, and collect information concerning alternative proposals for meeting Okaloosa County's drinking-water needs. Statement outlining action to support the position (approved and added at Annual Meeting 2003)

League will carry out actions necessary to reflect the position that a dam and reservoir should not be erected on the Yellow River unless competent experts give the project their unqualified endorsement following evaluation of feasibility and environmental impact studies, identification and analysis of alternative sources, and assessment of ecological and other costs associated with all alternative sources. Until such endorsement is given, League will oppose the project based on relevant National and State League environmental positions. The LWVOC will continue to work closely with the League of Women Voters of the Pensacola Bay Area on the Yellow River Dam and reservoir issue.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – COUNTY

League Yardstick: A Guide for Local Government (first adopted 1976)

Okaloosa County government should include the following home rule provisions:

- *An opportunity for the voters of Okaloosa County to choose the type and structure of local government to meet local needs.*
- *A representative policy-determining body or council of manageable proportions, elected by the voters and responsible to them for the conduct of county affairs.*
- *A single county executive appointed by the commission, responsible for the effective administration of county services.*
- *An administrative staff appointed by the county executive and subject to confirmation by the commission. The administrative staff will be responsible to the county executive.*
- *Clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility.*
- *Consolidation and/or coordination of offices and/or personnel to promote efficiency and economy in government and the improvement of countywide services.*
- *Adequate and equitable revenue sources with tax in proportion to services rendered.*
- *Full implementation of an official comprehensive land use plan.*
- *Cooperation with government bodies in areas involving regional programs and planning.*
- *A mandatory merit system for county civil service personnel.*

Charter Government for Okaloosa County

LWVOC supports charter government for Okaloosa County because:

- *Charter government would give the citizens of Okaloosa County the best form of home rule.*
- *Charter government would prevent reliance on state action in many instances.*
- *Charter government would allow the commissioners to become policy makers, and administration of the county could be charged to a professional administrator.*
- *Charter government could include item #3 as well as other items on the League "yardstick."*
- *Charter government would give the citizens an opportunity for input regarding the structure of the county government—as opposed to the current state-mandated structure.*
- *Changes would be effected only by referendum.*

Tourist Development Tax (first adopted 1984)

After study the following position was reached:

Before the League can consider this tax as viable for Okaloosa County, restrictions on uses of revenue must be eased. (We support including infrastructure items.)

Countywide Library System (first adopted 1991)

The LWVOC supports the concept of a countywide library system.

Municipal Government Yardstick (first adopted 1984)

Municipal governments in Okaloosa County should include the following home rule provisions:

- *An opportunity for the voters of the municipality to choose the type and structure of local government to meet local needs.*
- *A representative policy-determining body or council of manageable proportions, elected by the voters and responsible to them for the general conduct of municipal affairs.*
- *Clearly defined lines of authority and responsibility.*
- *Consolidation and/or coordination of offices and/or personnel, to promote the improvement of municipal services.*
- *Adequate and equitable revenue sources with tax in proportion to services rendered.*
- *Cooperation with government bodies in areas involving regional programs and planning.*

Political Merger/Consolidation of Services (first adopted 1990)

The LWVOC supports consolidation of services within the defined areas of south Okaloosa county if pertinent data resulting from an independent, professional study indicate that such consolidation would result in more efficient, effective and economical services.

The LWVOC supports political merging within the defined area if an independent, professional feasibility study indicates that merging would ensure more efficient, effective and economical government.

The geographical area covered in this study is defined as:

All contiguous areas south of Eglin AFB, bordered on the east by Eglin and Choctawhatchee Bay, on the south by Eglin and the Gulf, and on the west by Hurlburt Field. Specifically this includes Lake Lorraine, Longwood, Poquito Bayou, Shalimar, Ocean City, Wright, Cinco Bayou, Fort Walton Beach, Mary Esther and Santa Rosa Island, and any other unnamed parcels of unincorporated land lying within the defined area.

HEALTH CARE

Health Care for the Elderly (first adopted 1981)

The LWVOC supports the concept that the elderly in our county (citizens 60 or more years of age) must be provided good and affordable health care. We encourage the upgrading of existing programs and services and the implementation of additional ones such as:

- *The establishment of an Okaloosa Health Advisory Council.*
- *A "Health Education Series."*
- *A physician specializing in geriatrics.*
- *Installation of the 911 emergency number.*
- *Expanded long-term care (especially nursing home beds, Adult Congregate Living Facilities, Adult Foster Homes and home care services).*
- *Expanded funding to provide for life-saving equipment in ambulances, training for ambulance attendants, plus a permanent plan to retain county-operated ambulance service.*
- *Expanded funding to provide adequate staffing for the County Health Department.*

Mental Health Care (first adopted 1983)

After a two-year study the LWVOC concurred that an in-patient Baker Act receiving facility is needed in the county.

Available Elderly Services in Okaloosa County (first adopted 2005)

The LWVOC supports this study to identify available resources in the county and to determine if there is a need for more services.

TRANSPORTATION (first adopted by concurrence 2010)

The LWVOC supports the concept of regional transportation authorities; believes that state, county, municipal, regional authorities or combinations of all should work together to create a transportation system that serves the needs of all Floridians and protects the environment; supports provision of adequate, ongoing financing for construction, maintenance and operation of multi-modal transportation systems; and believes local and regional governments should be permitted to choose which funding option(s) are best for their areas.