

ELECTION LAWS

Statement of Position originally adopted 1977; revised and amended 1984, 1961, 1993, 1997, completely revised 2001; Section IX revised 2003

LWVMI supports:

- I. Uniformity in Michigan's election laws in regard to:
 - A. Simplification of the election process. This could be accomplished, in part, by
 1. Combining elections currently held at different times.
 2. Holding all Michigan elections on the same day of the week or closing all elections in the case of extended voting periods, on that same day.
 - B. Consistency of application of election laws in all jurisdictions.
 - C. Provisions to ensure accuracy and security in all aspects of the election process, and privacy in voting.

- II. Retention of primary authority for administering the election system by local clerks in cooperation with all election officials.

- III. Provisions for sufficient information on the location and substance of every election, and pertinent registration and voting procedures and deadlines. These should include but not be limited to:
 - A. Standardized, easily readable identification of each polling place;
 - B. Extensive notification in all media;
 - C. General availability of sample ballots.

- IV. Provisions to increase the ease and accessibility of voting, such as:
 - A. A requirement that each voting precinct in the state and each absentee ballot have adequate, simple, legible, highly visible instructions on using the voting device and on write-in voting.
 - B. Provision of an absentee ballot to any registered voter upon request.
 - C. Ballot design to enhance accuracy in voting and counting.
 - D. Use of technology, such as electronic voting, with safeguards for ensuring accuracy, security, and privacy.
 - E. Accommodation for voters with disabilities and special needs.

- V. The principles of initiative, referendum, and recall. Requirements for petitions such as the number of signatures and restrictions on the process of gathering signatures should be sufficient to prevent frivolous proposals, but not so high as to discourage grassroots efforts to initiate legislation, to amend the constitution or to recall our elected officials.
- VI. Fair and uniform regulation by state law of all political parties including those procedures relating to the nomination and election of candidates for public office.
 - A. Minor political parties are important in providing opportunities for the expression of diverse views. State requirements should allow minor political parties the opportunity to participate in the election process.
 - B. A political party must demonstrate its viability through an approved method including, but not necessarily limited to, petition filing or receiving a specified percentage of the vote in a previous state general election contest.
- VII. An open primary system for state and local candidates for office, whereby a voter declares political party affiliation only in the privacy of the voting booth.
- VIII. Michigan's participation in a regional presidential primary.
- IX. The selection of qualified judges free from political pressures:
 - A. Nonpartisan selection regardless of methods of appointment of election.
 - B. Gubernatorial appointment of judges to Supreme and Appellate Courts based on merit, as determined by an authorized, nonpartisan, broad based and diverse review panel; with subsequent retention election.
 - C. Election of judges for local courts from a nonpartisan ballot, based on the candidate's submission of nomination petitions.
 - D. Public funding of judicial elections.
 - E. Incumbent judges should not be so indicated on the ballot.