

# IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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THERE IS A LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS



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Dr. George Gallup presents the National Municipal League's Distinguished Citizen Award to Mrs. Robert J. Phillips, President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, which was characterized by Dr. Gallup as the "greatest civic army of all times." November 16, 1962







"The purpose of the League of Women Voters of the United States shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government."

**Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States**

"Only as each citizen believes in self-government so strongly that he is willing to make a personal effort to use political power can self-government become a reality. To spread this faith the League of Women Voters was born. For this it lives."

**Mrs. Walter T. Fisher**  
*Former National Board Member*

"Not to amass more knowledge of government, not even to spread it to a greater number of people, but to cause more people to use effectively what knowledge they possess seems today to be the unique aim of the League of Women Voters."

**Marguerite Wells**  
*President, League of Women Voters of the United States 1934-1944*

"The American political party as such seldom germinates, generates, or evolves new policies . . . This leaves the germination of theoretical ideas largely to outside organizations or movements . . . In the United States more than in other modern democracies organizations outside the party structure are in fact important parts of the political system."

**Joseph C. Harsch**



**It made a difference in the very beginning.**

The League of Women Voters was established in 1920, the year that woman's right to vote was finally incorporated in the Constitution of the United States.

Many women were timid about going to the polls for the first time. They did not know how to register to vote, how to mark a ballot. They knew very little about the way government operated. They wanted to work for needed legislation, wanted to make a contribution toward strengthening self-government—but didn't know how to do either.

The League of Women Voters was founded primarily to help the 20 million women voters to carry out their new responsibilities.

It made a difference that the League's leaders were women who had gained practical experience in relation to government through the long years of the battle for woman suffrage. They spread the philosophy that the best way to learn how to be effective citizens was to get the facts, put them in usable form, and then plunge in and learn while doing.

It made a difference that the League was—and is—concerned solely with government. Other organizations have programs or activities that touch government at some time and on some level, but the League's interest in government is perennial, total.

It made a difference that the League was nonpartisan. Women from both parties and those who didn't know which party they preferred could learn through the League. The League was—and is—open to all women citizens of voting age who believe in representative government.

It makes a difference now that the League is still training women for active citizenship—is still nonpartisan—is still open to all women.

At the present time 135,000 women in 1164 local Leagues in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are getting an education in politics and at the same time demonstrating that a nonpartisan organization can be politically effective.





1 In the 1962 campaign Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller appeared on the same platform with other candidates for Governor only once—at a League meeting televised in New York City for state-wide viewing.

The only such meeting in Texas the same year was held under League auspices in Dallas where 1000 people heard all three candidates for Governor speak from the same platform.

2 In St. Petersburg, Florida, League members help tabulate election returns.

3 In Philadelphia as in other League communities citizens take advantage of free Voters Service information put out by the League—in this case factual background material on the candidates and their answers to questions put to them by the League.



4 Hundreds of candidates meetings like this one in Clinton, Tennessee, are held for local office seekers. Bradford Jacobs of *The Baltimore Sun* says "You learn more about candidates from a League candidates meeting than from all the formal addresses, official platforms, cozy coffees, and knowing neighbors' whispers rolled up together."



## It makes a difference to the voter.

Over the years people who want impartial information—on who is running for office in local, state, or congressional elections, or on where and when to vote, or what the qualifications are, or what ballot issues are up for decision—have gotten into the habit of turning to the League of Women Voters.

Pioneers in the presentation of candidates meetings, pioneers in the publication of candidates questionnaires, pioneers in the publication of roll-call votes, pioneers in nonpartisan efforts to get large numbers of people registered and armed with enough information to make their vote effective—League members are still busy with Voters Service.

The League was the first national nonpartisan organization to launch a "get out the vote" campaign. After a stupendous effort in 1924, leaders realized that lack of interest in voting was a symptom of lack of interest in government, and that until such indifference was remedied voting habits would not improve.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund was established to undertake educational programs in the field of government. This service is available to other organizations as well as the League.

In some communities almost everywhere you look before an election you will spot a Voters Guide. In other places conscientious citizens have been known to stand in line for a chance to look at these materials so helpful in making a vote count as the voter wants it to.







1 Members of the Board of Commissioners in Durham, North Carolina, listen as a League member testifies about the need for more adequate water and sewer facilities in the county.

2 Every week when the City Council convenes in San Francisco the League Observer is in her place, notebook in hand, to keep an eye on the city's lawmakers. The League does believe that most public bodies function best when under public scrutiny, but the main purpose of the observer program is to keep the members up to date on what is happening in government and to provide insights and information invaluable as members prepare for action.

3 "Facts do not threaten, they operate," said Woodrow Wilson. League members try to get their facts firsthand. They make a point of going to see for themselves and of getting acquainted with government officials in person. Here, two members of the Champaign County (Illinois) League interview the mayor of Urbana to obtain information for a city government study.

4 Mrs. Joel Lee, President of the League of Women Voters of Dade County, Florida, helps raise the flag honoring the county for pioneering in "metro" government. The League was not only instrumental in getting the new form of government adopted but has fought several rearguard actions against forces which would undermine the system.

## It makes a difference in 1164 communities because . . .

Local Leagues in 170 communities are working on the problems of housing and urban renewal. It is high on the list of priorities in Minneapolis where this League member goes to "see for herself."



League members know their community. In one year, 244 local Leagues made Know Your Local Government surveys and published the results. Since 1922, Leagues have made such surveys based on a go-see-for-yourself technique, a tried and true method of not only giving members a firsthand contact with elementary facts of governmental life but also providing a factual basis for a later course of action.

League members keep an eye on things. In one year, meetings of 1893 local city councils, boards, and commissions were regularly attended by Observers from the League of Women Voters.

League members take action on local issues. Though nonpartisan with respect to candidates and political parties, the League takes stands on measures selected by the membership for study, decision, and action.

Each local League selects its own local Program. Therefore not all Leagues work on the same local issues and many work on more than one at a time.

In one year, 546 local Leagues worked on planning and zoning; 483 on public schools and education; 312 on assessments, financing, taxes, budgets; 310 on new city charters and/or city-manager government; 266 on recreation and parks; 206 on public health problems.







1 A state official in Colorado receives a proposal for reapportioning the state legislature from Mrs. L. M. Joshel of the League of Women Voters and representatives of other organizations. The Colorado League is one of 30 state Leagues working on apportionment.



2 Five members of the League of Women Voters attend the ceremonies as Governor Elbert N. Carvel of Delaware signs the Delaware River Basin Compact—a measure studied and supported by Leagues in four states.



3 League members from all over Wisconsin converge on Madison to observe the legislature in action, talk to their delegations, and receive briefings from state officials. Most state Leagues have similar programs.

## It makes a difference in the states because...

The League makes studies of such state matters as election laws, fiscal policy, home rule, regional planning, higher education.

The League pays attention to state lawmaking bodies. League members visit their state legislatures frequently. They lobby in Capitol corridors and by letter, and testify at hearings.

In states where the legislature is unresponsive and the initiative and referendum are available, Leagues sometimes utilize government-by-petition to focus attention on needed action.

... 210,000 signatures were obtained by the Michigan League as a preliminary step in obtaining a new state constitution.

... the Maryland League took the lead twice in getting sufficient signatures to head off an unfair redistricting act.

... Leagues in Colorado, Oklahoma, and Washington have successfully petitioned to get reapportionment measures on the ballot.

The League works to strengthen state governments. Believing that the success of our federal system depends in large measure upon the performance of the states, the League works to strengthen the fundamental structure of state government through constitutional revision, fair apportionment of state legislatures, and court reform.

Each state League selects the issues on which the Leagues within the state concentrate.



"Whereas Capitol corridors teem with people who want something for themselves at their neighbor's expense, the genius of the League lies in its disinterestedness . . ."

G. Theodore Mittau  
Professor of Political Science  
Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota.





1  
President Kennedy greets delegates to the League's national Council meeting in May 1963 and congratulates them on their stand on foreign policy issues. Shown with him is Mrs. Robert J. Phillips, the League's national President. Mrs. Phillips was appointed by the President in March 1963 to serve on his Commission on Registration and Voting Participation.



2  
In receiving delegates to the League's 1957 national Council meeting President Eisenhower used the occasion to make a major foreign policy statement. Shown with him is Mrs. John G. Lee, the League's national President 1950-58. She was appointed by President Eisenhower as a member of the liaison group between the public and the Foreign Operations Administration.



3  
Leagues often present television programs on governmental problems which need public attention. Dr. Maurice Goddard, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Forests and Waters and a member of the Potomac River Basin Commission, answers questions on the future of the Potomac River.

**It makes a difference to the country as a whole.**



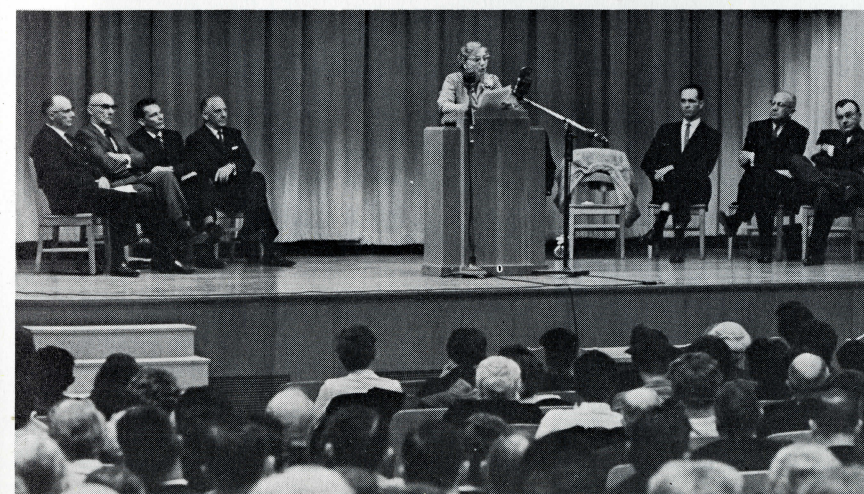
"The work of the League of Women Voters this year on the trade program is already legend in Washington."

Walt Whitman Rostow  
Counselor and Chairman, Policy Planning  
Council, Department of State, May 3, 1962



"... I never cease to be impressed at the clarity with which the women of the League of Women Voters are able to grasp current world problems ..."

U.S. Senator Jacob K. Javits (R., N.Y.)  
Congressional Record, July 30, 1963



In addition to study, decision, and action on local and state problems, the League works on selected national issues. With so many governmental problems crying for attention, members of an organization concentrating on just a few must make the selection with care.

All 1164 local Leagues have a say in the selection of national Program. All 1164 local Leagues study, come to decision on, and work on the same national issues. Even on a national issue, study includes "see for yourself" when possible. In studying international trade, Leagues made surveys of the impact of imports and exports on their areas.

In studying water resources, Leagues used their river basins as laboratories in which to test theory.

Members read publications prepared by the national Board and staff who do a thorough research of past and current thinking in the particular field; members also dig out their own material. Before the members make up their minds they read and discuss and read some more.

Action on a national issue means political action—testifying before congressional committees, interviewing lawmakers, writing letters to public officials.

Action also means arousing interest in the issue—creating public opinion and urging like-minded community leaders to exert their influence.

In recent years Leagues have taken action for conservation and development of water resources, with concentration on measures for pollution abatement; for an expanded program of economic aid and technical assistance abroad; for the United Nations bond issue; for the Trade Expansion Act; for self-government and congressional representation for the District of Columbia; against constitutional limitation of tax rates.

Among thousands of League-sponsored meetings on trade in 1962 was one in Kansas chaired by former Governor Alfred M. Landon and addressed by U.S. Senator Frank Carlson (R., Kans.), and business, farm, and labor leaders.



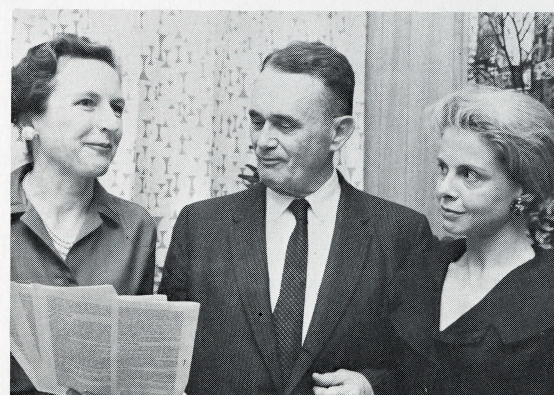


1 Mrs. George A. Little: "Is there anything we as citizens can do to help the United Nations?"

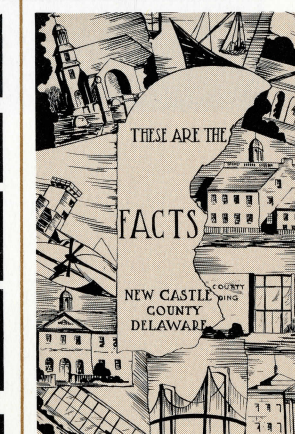
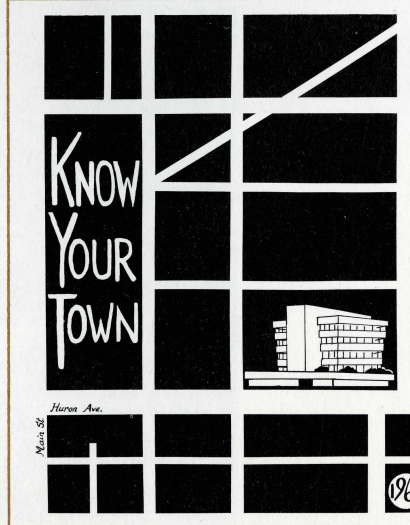
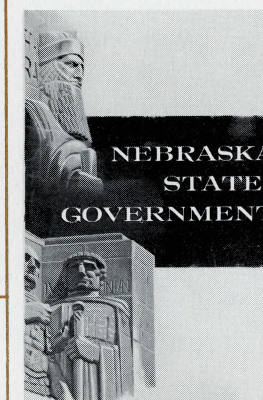
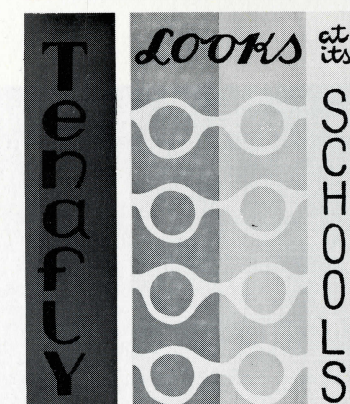
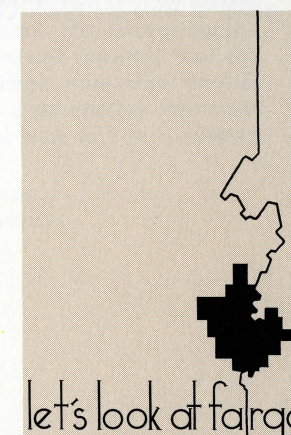
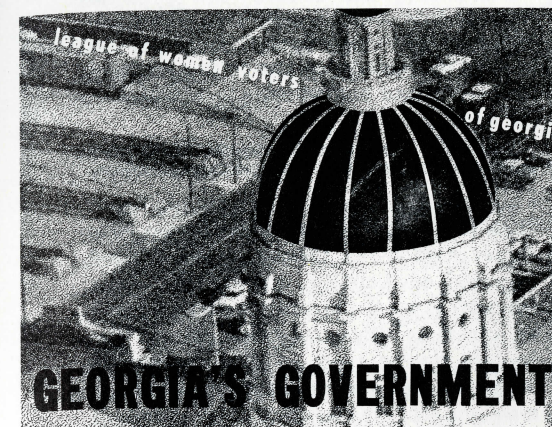
Ambassador Stevenson: "Just what the members of the League of Women Voters are doing, Mrs. Little. Study it, understand it, and explain it. If good citizens hadn't been doing that for the last 17 years, I am quite sure the United Nations would not be here today."

2 Three full-time consultants from the Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters are now at work in Latin America helping with Know Your Local Government studies, Voters Service, and organizational techniques. Here, one of the consultants meets with women leaders from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.

3 League sponsorship of public meetings helps pose alternatives. "What is the alternative to a United Nations?" Ralph McGill, publisher of *The Atlanta Constitution*, asks an audience in Auburn, Alabama.



It may even make a difference to the world.



This sounds pretentious. But let's see.

Other countries look to the United States as the prime example of a successful system of representative democracy. The better our system works the more appeal it has to other countries.

The League, believing that the character of our nation is determined in our towns, cities, and states, strives to help strengthen local and state governments, to make our communities better places in which to live. The League works on national issues designed to benefit not just one section, not just one group, but the country as a whole.

The League works to increase international understanding and to build public support of the United Nations. The League supports economic development of other nations and an expanding trade.

And through the Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters, the League shares its experience in the practical techniques of active and effective citizenship.

The OEF responds to requests from overseas, trains for leadership selected men and women from other countries, helps foreign visitors become more aware of the duties of self-government, and provides educational materials. The OEF carries on a sort of "technical assistance" program by sharing with people around the world what the United States has learned about the development of liberty and the processes of democracy.

The results of League surveys are used in schools and by businessmen as a way to interest newcomers in the community.

A copy of *Know Your Local Government* has been included in a packet on women's activities sent by the United States Information Agency to its posts in over 100 countries.



It makes a difference to the women who are members.



1

A woman's interest in government may rest largely on her concern with the kind of world her children will inherit. She realizes that the future of self-government depends on the way we make it work today. Many young women, such as this one from California, who enjoyed doing research in school, like keeping their minds alert by getting the facts themselves and putting them in usable form for discussion.

2

"I've learned a lot," a member from New Jersey says. "The League is like a great sprawling adult college. It sometimes seems fabulous to me to think that there are groups of women in cities and towns all over the country digging away . . . The classes are informal . . . we have discussion meetings . . . members study the subject . . . ask questions . . . contribute what they know." This is a group in Durham, North Carolina.



1

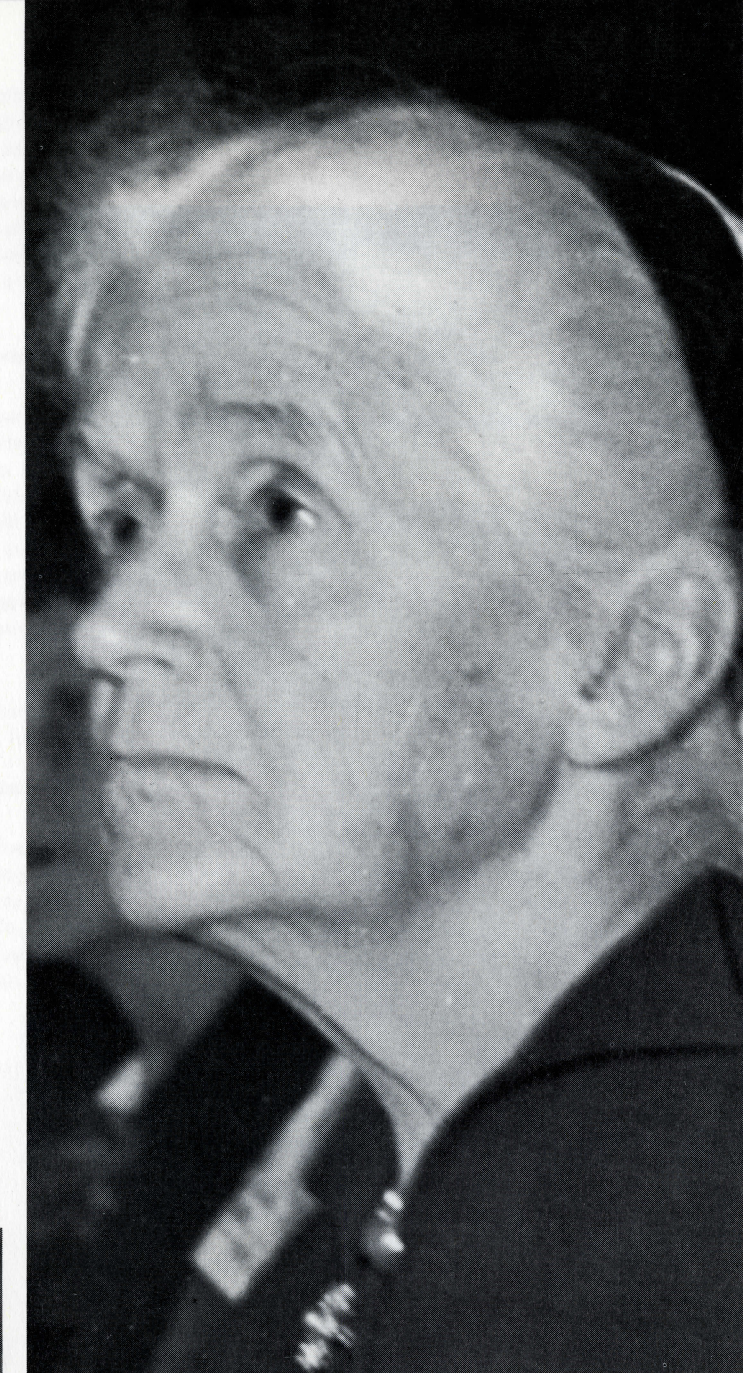
"I majored in political science at college and I feel I'm putting all my college training to use," says the President of a big city League in New England. "I can't think of anything more fascinating than politics and government, and the League is a wonderful way for me to be in the middle of all this." The League members pictured are in the "middle of all this" in Minneapolis.

2

"I was active in the last ten years of the suffrage fight, then became active in the League of Women Voters. Through the League I learned the technique of tackling intricate and vital problems of government. There are plenty of practical and useful things to do in relation to government and through the League I have the stimulus of intelligent, interesting people to do them with.

"I like the League because it fits the pattern of most women's lives. The busiest mother can go to a League unit meeting, read the literature, keep in touch. And when the last child is grown and away she has vitally important and familiar work to turn to instead of empty days."

Mrs. James Morrisson  
New London, Connecticut



2





It makes a difference on the political scene.



1  
"... and then they (women) join a party and find out their work with the League of Women Voters has been good training for participation in whatever area of politics they may choose. I think the League has probably furnished more active party members than it sometimes realizes."

Eleanor Roosevelt, May 3, 1962

2  
To protect the League's nonpartisanship Board members refrain from active party work while holding League office, but members are encouraged to be active in the party of their choice.

Mrs. Samuel Lord, Jr., resigned as President of the Delaware League to run for the State Senate as a Republican. She won.

3  
After serving as national First Vice President of the League Mrs. Harold A. Stone was elected a Democratic member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

4  
Mrs. Howard Willett, League member of Birmingham, Michigan, served as the city's Mayor.

5  
"I had been active in the League of Women Voters and we had a very hard fight about reapportioning of our legislature . . . It was really my first active participation in anything political.

"I said to my husband 'I am so disappointed that a certain friend of mine didn't file for the legislature; if I had known she wasn't going to, I think I would have.'

"And he said 'Why don't you?'

"And that's just the way it came about."

U. S. Senator Maurine B. Neuberger (D., Oreg.)

Over CBS-TV—August 1962



1  
League backing for a new city charter is often followed by appointment of one or more League members to the committee to draw up the document; similarly, League interest in zoning or recreation or schools often lands a League member on the board dealing with those particular problems. In Kirkwood, Missouri, League members serve on both school and recreation boards.

2  
"As the old political boss has disappeared what has come in his place? The single greatest instrument that has tended to replace him is the pressure group, the public interest group, which tends to restore politics to its proper role, namely making politics subordinate to public policy. There has been a vast proliferation of independent interest groups. The League is one of the oldest, most respected in the country . . ."

Gus Tyler

Director, Political Department, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, April 27, 1960

3  
Dr. Rensis Likert, Director, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, told League members that a Research Center Survey of the League reveals that "League people on the whole are persons who feel that the world has problems about which something can be done if people work at it."





## Does it make a difference to you?



1  
It makes a difference to Crowdus Baker, President, Sears Roebuck and Co., who says: "Business and industry in our democratic system must rely on good, responsible government in order to grow and prosper. Good government results from the efforts of many informed citizens. We have supported the League of Women Voters for many years because we know it is an effective citizens' research and action group."

2  
"As a businessman with a stake in the community, I believe it is sound economically to provide financial support and personal efforts to the League as one way to enable us to remain a strong and free society."

Irving Rose  
President, Advance Mortgage Corporation

3  
"It makes a difference that financial support of the League comes from about 200,000 different sources. No one person, no one group, no one enterprise contributes a substantial percentage of League income. Most of the money spent by the League comes from the members themselves through dues (which are kept low) and through their own contributions. About a third (37%) of our income comes from public-spirited non-members who want to add their money to League womanpower to achieve common objectives."

Mrs. LeMon Clark  
Treasurer, League of Women Voters of the United States

4  
The reason Leagues can do so much on so little is that they do most of the work themselves. No one is hired to make the survey, to write the report, or type the copy of the Voters Guide for the printer, as this Texas League member can attest. One member wrote "even the most mundane work connected with the day-to-day operation of the League makes me feel that I am 'doing something about the world.'"

Dear Reader:

"Government has its hands full these days at every level. It is being overwhelmed. Problems are too big, too complex . . . Therefore the voluntary organizations whose chief role is maintaining relationships with government have an increasingly big job to do." So says Erwin D. Canham, editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*.

In these pages we have tried to demonstrate the kinds of relationships the League of Women Voters—as a nonpartisan organization working on political matters in the public interest—has with government. We hope something else about the League has come through and that is the devotion of the League to the principles of representative government and individual liberty established in the Constitution of the United States.

It is because League members care about their country and care about our form of government that they pay so much attention to the way it works.

As government grows more and more complex the need grows for more and more citizens who combine devotion to our form of government with a knowledge of how the system works and a desire to be in on the decision making. League members are this kind of citizen.

Does it make a difference to you that there's a League of Women Voters? I most earnestly hope so.

*Nath S. Phillips*

President  
League of Women Voters of the United States



"'All men are created equal; governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.' Governments exist for men, not men for government . . . It is within this framework that the League of Women Voters can continue on an even larger scale its program of civic education to explain to all of us why we behave like Americans and how we can behave better than we do."

Peter Odegard  
Professor of Political Science, University of California, May 1962





U. S. Senator  
George D. Aiken  
(R., Vt.)

... "Only 135,000 of them?  
I thought there were millions."

#### PHOTO CREDITS

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