



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND

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URBAN POLICY

At the 1976 national convention, delegates added cities/urban crisis to the national program. The 1978 convention adopted an "evaluation of urban policy options, with emphasis on fiscal policy.

In Wisconsin, League members also studied the appropriate role of the state government in urban policy. They felt aid should go to both declining and distressed communities in the state, using these definitions:

Fiscally declining cities have these characteristics:

- a stabilized tax base, showing little change over a long period of time; and
- a stabilized or declining population (with growing numbers of elderly and poor, which is unable to support a major increase in property taxes).

Fiscally distressed cities have the above, as well as these additional characteristics:

- a loss of a major portion of the employment base and/or employers who are unable to provide job opportunities for low-skilled and low-income residents;
- a rapidly deteriorating housing stock including significant numbers of housing units constructed prior to 1939;
- a rapid incremental increase in labor costs to municipalities, due in part to escalating labor and pension costs.

In 1978, concurrent with the study, the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board and the LWVWI produced the film, "QUIET CHANGES: Small Towns in Crisis," which examined the urban problems of seven small cities in Wisconsin. Funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Committee, the film was intended to stimulate viewer discussion.

The position has been used in action on laws governing such development techniques as Tax Incremental Financing and Industrial Revenue Bonds.

(For details, see *Government*.) There has been no action specifically using Urban Policy positions in recent years.
