

Atlanta Urban League
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FACTS

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PROGRAM 1956-57

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The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Atlanta is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

The League carries out this purpose through its Voters Service and local, state, and national programs.

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Editor—Mrs. Robert Granitz

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THE LEAGUE'S PLAN OF ACTION

The Program of the League of Women Voters of Atlanta is determined by its members at the Annual Meeting. It is divided into three parts: Current Agenda—a few important local governmental issues selected for concentrated study and concerted action during the coming year; Continuing Responsibilities—positions on local issues to which the League has given sustained attention and on which it may continue to act; Platform Principles—the governmental principles supported by the League as a whole which give authority for the adoption of local, state and national program. (The principles from which the Atlanta Program derives are noted by each item.)

Voters Service is a year-round activity which provides the public with non-partisan factual information on the political processes, on candidates, and on issues in the interest of responsible and responsive government.

Action may be taken on Current Agenda items at any time and on Continuing Responsibilities whenever an exceptional need or opportunity for League action arises and the Board of Directors feels the membership is sufficiently informed and in agreement. Action is never taken on League principles alone.

Action may include (1) providing information, (2) building public opinion, (3) supporting legislation.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to supply the membership with basic information on all program items and to determine the action that will be most effective at a specific time.

For 1956-57, League action will concentrate on:

CURRENT AGENDA

I. A study of school finances in relation to school needs and to the resources of the community. (Principles 2, 3, 8, 11, 14)

This program item is the logical outgrowth of two items previously on the Current Agenda: 1) the study of the finances of the Atlanta and Fulton County schools which was the first item on the 1955-56 program; and 2) the League's long interest in local taxes and budgetary procedures.

Two publications make this item particularly pertinent at the present time: the "Ivey Report" which set forth the estimated needs, physical and other, of the Atlanta schools and the taxes needed to provide for them; and the forthcoming Buehler Report which will forecast services needed by an expanding city.

The complete separation of city school finances from general city finances in 1957 also contributes to the importance of this item. The fact that the 1956 General Assembly again made an emergency appropriation from the general county funds to the county schools, in spite of the fact that the county school district voted to raise the millage limit for county schools, points up the urgency of the problem.

In attacking this problem, the first step will be a careful evaluation of the two reports mentioned. Since money for the city schools, the city services, and, to a large extent, for the county schools comes from the pockets of the same taxpayers, these needs will be assessed in relation to the ability of the community to pay for them, with emphasis on an equitable distribution of the cost.

II. Improvement of local election processes with special emphasis on fixing candidates' fees by law and payment of costs of elections from public funds. (Principles 2, 7)

This is a continuation of Item III on the 1955-56 Current Agenda. The item has been studied for two years and basic research completed. What remains to be done is to reach final agreement on the revisions needed in local election laws.

The League has long believed that candidates' fees should be set by law and that costs of elections should be paid from public funds. Still to be decided are how many city elections are necessary, how the size of the candidates' fees should be determined and who should run city elections if they are publicly financed.

In answering these questions, it will be necessary to bear in mind that local city elections are actually non-partisan and thus the responsibility of all the people rather than of party groups. Changes in the local election laws must also be evaluated in the light of encouraging qualified candidates to run and of helping the voter to carry out his obligations as a citizen.

Legislation is expected in this field next January because 1957 is a city election year. The League must be prepared to consider legislation proposed by other groups and may wish to recommend legislation of its own.

CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Late Primary (Principles 2, 7)
2. Reduction in size of party executive committees (Principle 7)
3. Short Ballot (Principles 2, 3,)
4. Home Rule (Principles 2, 3)
5. One Government (Principle 5)
6. Plan of Improvement (Principle 5)
7. The Manager Plan (Principle 3)
8. Uniform Merit System (Principle 6)
9. Sound Budgeting Practices for Local Governments (Principles 3, 5, 11, 14)

PLATFORM PRINCIPLES

1. The principles of representative government and individual liberty established in the Constitution of the United States.
2. A system of government which is responsive to the will of the people and which enables the voter to carry out his obligations as a citizen.
3. A system of government in which responsibility is clearly fixed.
4. A system of government which promotes coordination of the operations of federal, state and local governments.
5. Governmental organization and administration which contribute to economy and efficiency.
6. A merit system for the selection, retention and promotion of government personnel.
7. Legal protection of citizens in their right to vote.
8. A system of free public education which provides equal opportunity for all.

9. Protection of minority groups against discrimination.
10. Removal of legal and administrative discriminations against women.
11. A system of federal, state and local taxation which is flexible and equitable.
12. Fiscal and monetary policies that promote a stable and expanding economy.
13. Responsibility of government to share in the solution of social and economic problems which affect the general welfare.
14. Adequate financing of government functions and services.
15. Conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest.
16. Domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.
17. Cooperation with other nations in solving international problems and promoting world peace.
18. Development of international organization and international law to achieve permanent means of cooperation.

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*Continuing Responsibilities.