

LWV Ohio State Convention
May 13, 2011
Caucus on Human Trafficking Study Proposal

Why a Human Trafficking Study Proposal?

Although one of the League's principles is that the League believes in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States, that principle alone, without a supporting study and consensus, is not enough for the League to act on the human trafficking issue. Also known as modern-day slavery, trafficking has become a major human rights problem in Ohio. LWV Ohio was unable to advocate for the legislation passed last session that made human trafficking a stand-alone felony in Ohio, despite member concern.

Companion legislation that would have provided victim services and public awareness programs never left committee. There is still work to be done on the issue, and because legislation to provide services will involve funding, its passage will be difficult and will need wide support by advocates.

Therefore, a state study is proposed that would allow the state and local Leagues to advocate for the victims, who frequently are minors and who are often treated as the criminals. Former Attorney General Cordray's Trafficking in Persons Study Commission has several reports and recommendations available that can form the basis for the study, which would likely shorten the time frame necessary for completion and allow the League to be able to join the fight against this problem.

The study commission's reports are available on the attorney general's Web site, www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov.

A Human Trafficking Position would allow Leagues to:

- Advocate for legislation assuring victims' rights, with a focus on how minor victims of sex trafficking are treated by the criminal justice system;
- Join in coalition with other organizations on a high-profile issue in their own communities, working to provide community-based services to victims;
- Educate communities on how to recognize and report human trafficking.