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# **League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia Records**

## **An inventory of League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia at DC Public Library**

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English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW

Washington, DC

[archives.dcpl@dc.gov](mailto:archives.dcpl@dc.gov)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	People's Archive, MLK Library
<b>Creator:</b>	League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia
<b>Title:</b>	League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia Records
<b>ID:</b>	033
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1930-1982
<b>Physical Description:</b>	22.5 Linear feet
<b>Physical Description:</b>	31 Boxes
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English

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## Biographical / Historical

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As a result of the 19th Amendment that gave women the right to vote, the National League of Women Voters (NLWV) was established to educate women on how to vote and to provide information on public issues. On May 26, 1921, a meeting was called in the home of Mrs. Gifford Pinchot to form a District of Columbia branch of the National League of Women Voters. League charter members included Mrs. Frank Hiram Snell, Mrs. J. Borden Harriman, Mrs. Grace Chamberlain, Judge Mary O'Toole, Miss Harleen James, and Mrs. Elizabeth Brownlow. Famous members of the League have included First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Mrs. A.J. McKelway, wife of Benjamin McElway, who became editor of the Washington Evening Star in 1947. In 1926, the League adopted the name, "The Voteless District of Columbia League of Women Voters," to emphasize the District's disenfranchisement. Since its inception, the League's primary focus has been to educate and lobby for greater self-government for the citizens of the District. The D.C. League has worked on a variety of issues important to the District as well as national and international issues supported by the NWLV. During the 1930s and 1940s, the League conducted studies regarding public assistance relief and child welfare in the District, supported home front mobilization efforts during World War II, D.C. government reorganization, juvenile court changes, child labor laws, the 40-hour work week, and improvement of D.C. schools. Starting in the 1940s, the League began working for better race relations and supporting civil rights in the Nation's capital. The League supported desegregating District schools, and anti-discrimination laws in federal government employment and housing. In the 1950s and 1960s the League focused much of its attention on D.C. suffrage and home rule. By the 1980s, the League had positions on a number of public policy issues

such as support of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs), a rapid rail system, urban planning, Equal Rights Amendment ratification, and gun control laws with qualified support for the University of the District of Columbia and statehood for the District. The League prints a Voters Guide each election, sponsors a speakers bureau, conducts political debates, and advocates for a number of public policy issues for all D.C. citizens.

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## Scope and Contents

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The collection contains clippings and alphabetically arranged office files maintained by the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia to document its activities. Topics in the records cover primarily local D.C. political issues, but also national and international concerns of the National League of Women Voters. The records are divided into two series: topical files and clippings.

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## Arrangement

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Series 1: Topical Files, 1960-1979 (10 linear ft.) This series contains office files that contain correspondence, reports, proposals, newsletters, and programs on a variety of topics and issues of concern to the League. The series also contains files on the League's operations, including its by-laws, reports to the National League, and information on the League's Speakers Bureau. The series is further arranged chronologically into subseries. The first series covers Pre-1960 files with subsequent subseries generally covering one or two decades. Within each subseries, the folders are arranged alphabetically by topic. Subseries 1: Pre-1960 files, 1930-1960 (4.5 linear ft.) Significant topics included in the 1960 files are urban renewal, the Consumer's League, juvenile court law revision in the 1930s, recreation, urban housing, anti-discrimination, child welfare, foreign policy, and an all-day school proposal. Subseries 2: 1960-1969 files (4.5 linear ft.) Post-1960 topics include education, urban planning, the Metro Council, minimum wage, voter education, and election law reform. The files also contain files on international issues such as foreign relations and trade and opposition to totalitarian regimes. Subseries 3: 1970-1979 files (1 linear ft.) Files regarding the Potomac Metro Water Basin (1976-1979) and materials from a 1960 study of foreign relations with China are included in this subseries. Series 2: Clippings, 1960-1982 (2.5 linear ft.) This series contains clippings compiled by League members and staff regarding political issues of concern to the League. Home rule, the D.C. budget, D.C. public officials, civil rights, health, higher education, public schools, transportation, and taxes are only a few of the public policy issues covered by the clippings.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

People's Archive, MLK Library

901 G Street NW  
Washington, DC  
[archives.dcpl@dc.gov](mailto:archives.dcpl@dc.gov)

### Revision Description

Finding aid revised to be more evergreen. 2020-05-18

### Custodial History

The Library received its first donation of records from the League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia in 1981 from Sue Panzer, President of the League. Subsequent donations have been received periodically from League members.

### Processing Information

Standard archival processing procedures were applied to the collection when it was processed.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Internal Collection 001: Julius Hobson Papers (1960-1977) Collection 009: Harry S. Wender Papers (1930-1973) Collection 048: District of Columbia Statehood Commission Records (1788-1994) Collection 055: Home Rule Committee Collection (1939-1961) Collection 089: Martha McNeil Hamilton Collection (1971-1997)

External DC History Center: E1670, League of Women Voters of the District of Columbia Ephemera Collection George Washington University, Special Collections Research Center: MS 2326, Helen Halbig Papers

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## Controlled Access Headings

- Civil rights
- Politics and government
- Statehood (American politics)
- Urban renewal
- Gentrification
- Home rule -- Washington (D.C.)
- Organizational Records
- Associations, institutions, etc
- Women
- Suffrage

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1: Topical Files, 1960-1979

#### Scope and Contents

This series contains office files that contain correspondence, reports, proposals, newsletters, and programs on a variety of topics and issues of concern to the League. The series also contains files on the League's operations, including its by-laws, reports to the National League, and information on the League's Speakers Bureau. The series is further arranged chronologically into subseries. The first series covers Pre-1960 files with subsequent subseries generally covering one or two decades. Within each subseries, the folders are arranged alphabetically by topic.

### Subseries 1: Pre-1960 files, 1930-1960

#### Scope and Contents

Significant topics included in the 1960 files are urban renewal, the Consumer's League, juvenile court law revision in the 1930s, recreation, urban housing, anti-discrimination, child welfare, foreign policy, and an all-day school proposal.

Title/Description	Instances	
All Day School thru Anti-discrimination, Undated	Box 1	Folder 1
Benefits thru Congressional roll calls, Undated	Box 2	Folder 1
Consumers' League thru Fiscal policy: U.S., Undated	Box 3	Folder 1
Finances, Undated	Box 4	Folder 1

Juvenile court thru Liberties, Undated	Box 5	Folder 1
Leadership training thru LWV National Council, Undated	Box 6	Folder 1
National program, 1938-1961	Box 7	Folder 1
Office activities thru Publicity, Undated	Box 8	Folder 1
Public relations thru Publications, Undated	Box 9	Folder 1
Recreation thru Urban planning and housing, Undated	Box 10	Folder 1
Urban renewal thru welfare, Undated	Box 11	Folder 1

## Subseries 2: 1960-1969 files

### Scope and Contents

Post-1960 topics include education, urban planning, the Metro Council, minimum wage, voter education, and election law reform. The files also contain files on international issues such as foreign relations and trade and opposition to totalitarian regimes.

Title/Description	Instances	
Anti-discrimination thru Citizen involvement, Undated	Box 12	Folder 1
D.C. budget thru D.C. government statistics, Undated	Box 13	Folder 1
D.C. Government revenues thru Education Committee reports, Undated	Box 14	Folder 1
Education: higher thru Education, Undated	Box 15	Folder 1
Employment thru Human resources, 1961-1965	Box 16	Folder 1
International relations thru lobbying, Undated	Box 17	Folder 1
Metro Council thru Observer Corporation, 1959-1966	Box 18	Folder 1
Positions thru Speakers Bureau, Undated	Box 19	Folder 1
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 20	Folder 1
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 20	Folder 2
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 20	Folder 3
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 20	Folder 4
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 20	Folder 5
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 1
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 2
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 3
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 4
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 5
Urban planning and housing, 1960-1964	Box 21	Folder 6

Voters' services: election laws thru Welfare, Undated

Box 22

Folder 1

### Subseries 3: 1970-1979 files

#### Scope and Contents

Files regarding the Potomac Metro Water Basin (1976-1979) and materials from a 1960 study of foreign relations with China are included in this subseries.

Title/Description	Instances	
China study material, 1969	Box 23	Folder 1
Potomac Metro Water Basin, 1976-1979	Box 24	Folder 1

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### Series 2: Clippings, 1960-1982

#### Scope and Contents

This series contains clippings compiled by League members and staff regarding political issues of concern to the League. Home rule, the D.C. budget, D.C. public officials, civil rights, health, higher education, public schools, transportation, and taxes are only a few of the public policy issues covered by the clippings.

Title/Description	Instances	
Untitled, 1960-1968	Box 25	Folder 1
Untitled, 1969-1971	Box 26	Folder 1
Untitled, 1972-1973	Box 27	Folder 1
Untitled, 1974-1977	Box 28	Folder 1
Untitled, 1978-1979	Box 29	Folder 1
Untitled, 1980-1981	Box 30	Folder 1
Untitled, 1982	Box 31	Folder 1

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