



LWVNC POSITIONS ON NC CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

The 2018 NC General Election ballot will include six proposed amendments to the NC Constitution, for which voters may vote “For” or “Against.” This guide shows each amendment as it will appear on the ballot, a link to the official explanation, and a link to the bill defining the amendment. We also state the League of Women Voters of North Carolina’s position on each amendment, as well as the rationale for the League’s position.

The LWVNC will only support proposed constitutional amendments that advance and conform to a League position. In addition, the League believes appropriate and well-crafted amendments must address matters of such acute and abiding importance that the fundamental charter of NC must be changed. None of the six proposed amendments that will appear on the 2018 ballot meet these standards. Furthermore, four of the six are dangerous to the democratic health of our state requiring us to come out **AGAINST** them.

1. ESTABLISH AN EIGHT-MEMBER BIPARTISAN BOARD OF ETHICS AND ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment to establish an eight-member Bipartisan Board of Ethics and Elections Enforcement in the Constitution to administer ethics and elections law.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to House Bill 4
- **LWVNC position: AGAINST**
- **LWVNC rationale:** The proposed amendment transfers appointment power of the Board of Ethics and Elections from the Governor to the General Assembly. However, the Board is part of the Executive Branch under the Governor, making the amendment’s approach a violation of the Constitution’s separation of powers. The amendment also changes the number of Board members from nine to eight, and equally divides them between the major parties. This will likely result in deadlock of the Board of Ethics and Elections, putting our elections at risk. The League believes that the selection of a ninth member of the Board by the Governor will produce a more workable Board.

2. ESTABLISH NONPARTISAN JUDICIAL MERIT COMMISSIONS.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment to change the process for filling judicial vacancies that occur between judicial elections from a process in which the Governor has sole appointment power to a process in which the people of the State nominate individuals to fill vacancies by way of a commission comprised of appointees made by the judicial, executive, and legislative branches charged with making recommendations to the legislature as to which nominees are deemed qualified; then the legislature will recommend nominees to the Governor via legislative action not subject to gubernatorial veto; and the Governor will appoint judges from among these nominees.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to House Bill 3
- **LWVNC position: AGAINST**
- **LWVNC rationale:** The proposed amendment provides few details on the composition of the merit commission—how members would be vetted and selected—and reduces the influence and power of the governor to affect the process. This proposal removes the governor’s power to fill judicial vacancies and would dramatically increase the power of legislators to control who sits on our state courts.

3. REQUIRE PHOTO ID TO VOTE.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment to require voters to provide photo identification before voting in person.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to House Bill 1092
- **LWVNC position: AGAINST**
- **LWVNC rationale:** The proposed amendment restricts voting access to those with a photo ID. It provides no information on how those who lack ID—particularly the poor, young, and elderly—will be able to get a free and easily obtainable photo ID. It imbeds a technology requirement into the constitution that may be outdated in the near future due to the increasing use of biometric data. Election detail specifics should be created by legislation, not a constitutional amendment.

4. REDUCE THE MAXIMUM STATE INCOME TAX RATE TO SEVEN PERCENT.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment to reduce the maximum income tax rate from 10% to 7%.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to Senate Bill 75
- **LWVNC position: AGAINST**
- **LWVNC rationale:** The proposed amendment unduly restricts the ability of elected House and Senate members to modify the income tax level based upon the needs of the state at any particular time. Our elected officials need flexibility to respond to changes in the economy when those changes significantly impact the needs of North Carolinians.

5. STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment to strengthen protections for victims of crime; to establish certain absolute basic rights for victims; and to ensure the enforcement of these rights.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to House Bill 551
- **LWVNC position: NO POSITION**
- **LWVNC rationale:** N/A

6. PROTECT THE RIGHT TO HUNT AND FISH.

- Ballot question: () **For** () **Against** Constitutional amendment protecting the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife.
- [Link](#) to official explanation
- [Link](#) to Senate Bill 677
- **LWVNC position: NO POSITION**
- **LWVNC rationale:** N/A