



Tuesday, February 27, 2024

Dear Senators and Representatives to the Louisiana Legislature:

The 2024 Second Extraordinary Session on crime, in its proposed legislation, has already violated our League positions on criminal justice. We write to express our concern about **bills below** that we believe are not in the best interest of the state of Louisiana and its people.

To start, the League opposes the **death penalty** and supports its abolition. Legislation that proposes to expand methods of execution and provide execution secrecy to prevent the public from knowing about providers of execution technologies (**HB 6**) violates League policies and positions, both concerning the death penalty itself and the public's right to know.

When it comes to **juvenile justice**, we believe in treating children as children (**HB 1, SB 3, SB 4, SB 11**). The League has taken positions in favor of giving judges discretion to reduce juvenile sentences and that essentially ban juvenile solitary confinement and similarly harsh measures. We support good time and parole for both juvenile and adult offenders. (**HB 9, HB 10, HB 11**). We believe that such policies give offenders opportunities for rehabilitation and second chances.

With respect to **gun policy**, the League believes that the proliferation of weapons is a major health and safety threat to Louisiana and its citizens. The League supports strong measures to limit accessibility to and regulate ownership of guns, especially since Louisiana leads the nation in firearm deaths to children and is among the top states for firearm deaths, generally. We reject the policies embodied in the permitless, concealed carry bills (**HB 12, SB 1, SB 2**).

The League's criminal justice position requires a strong, viable system of **public defenders (SB 8)**, capable of providing adequate counsel to defend indigent accused. Prosecutors, defense attorneys, public defenders, and judges should be provided with training on alternatives to incarceration, including pre-trial diversion and restorative justice practices.

The League of Women Voters of Louisiana is a nonpartisan, volunteer political advocacy organization committed to keeping our citizens informed. The League does not support political candidates, but we do take policy positions regarding individual rights, good government, and other issues that we deem significant for democracy and public participation in civic life.

Above all, we at the League believe in a criminal justice system that is **just, equitable, and transparent** and that **fosters public trust** at all stages, including policing practices, pretrial procedures, sentencing, incarceration, and reentry. There should be a focus on **humane treatment and rehabilitation** to promote **successful reentry** into communities of those who have been incarcerated.

Respectfully,

**Bonnie J. Schmidt**, Criminal Justice Committee Chair and Vice President, LWV of Louisiana  
**M. Christian Green**, President, LWV of Louisiana