

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**2009-2010 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**ISSUE 1:** All children in South Carolina need and deserve the opportunity for a high quality education that will prepare them to be productive workers and thoughtful citizens.

**Action:** SC General Assembly enacts legislation to submit a referendum to the voters at the next general election, amending the South Carolina constitution to state: "South Carolina will provide a high quality education, allowing every student the opportunity to reach his or her highest potential."

**ISSUE 2:** The level and distribution of funding resources should ensure that schools have what they need to provide a high quality education.

**Action:** SC General Assembly enacts legislation to comprehensively reform the funding formula established by the Education Finance Act.

- Create a Foundation Program that bases funding on a "high quality" education that prepares all students to function effectively in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.
- Revise calculation of per student cost to reflect the additional cost of educating children living in poverty and children with special needs.
- Commit to fully funding the Foundation Program.
- Commit to fully funding any expenditures mandated by the state.
- Encourage effective use of limited resources by reducing unnecessary regulation and promoting flexible and innovative approaches.
- Establish standards and measures to assure accountability for all school districts.

**Action:** SC General Assembly enacts legislation to fully fund early childhood services, including instructional, for children who are at risk of not being prepared to enter 5K due to disabilities, development delays, and/or poverty. When state finances allow, fully fund services to children ages birth to kindergarten (5K) who are at risk.

**Action:** The SC General Assembly continues to oppose proposals to use public funds for vouchers or tax credits to support private school education.

**ISSUE 3:** South Carolina tax and budgetary policy should assure that funding for public schools is stable, adequate and equitable.

**Action:** SC General Assembly enacts legislation to correct the most serious problems caused by Act 388.

- Change the calculation of the Index of Taxpaying Ability to reflect the change in the taxable status of owner-occupied property.

- Protect the ability of school districts to raise adequate local revenue by revising assessment caps and millage caps, preventing further erosion of the property tax base, and forbidding diversion of property tax revenue into tax credits or vouchers for private schools.
- Increase the amount of annual property tax relief distributed to the schools by the same inflation factor that is used to increase wages of public school employees.
- Establish uniform minimum millage as the required local match for the Foundation Program instead of the current EFA formula. Allow districts the discretion to levy additional millage if needed to fund the educational program.

Action: The General Assembly creates an independent, permanent tax commission with adequate staff and a broad mandate to study and recommend tax policies that ensure an adequate, equitable and efficient state and local revenue structure.