

**The LWV Columbia-Boone County (MO) (90 years old) proposes that the LWVUS 2010 National Convention adopt a study on the establishment of a cabinet level Department of Peace.**

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We urge your League to seriously consider a Department of Peace during program planning.

The League has many positions dealing with domestic and international peace. (At least 15 positions in 7 topical areas.) The federal government also has a number of peace related programs scattered through several departments and poorly funded. A Department of Peace would increase the influence of peace on policy decisions by having a cabinet level, proactive advocate for peace. There have been proposals over the last 70 years to create a Department of Peace and at this time the political situation is perhaps as good as it has ever been for passage.

A major emphasis would be on violence reduction in the U.S. The Department would evaluate and disseminate programs which will reduce violence. This would be done with programs supporting building communicative peace skills, the sort of civic communication and discussion the LWV employs, and nonviolent conflict resolution skills in schools from elementary to postgraduate levels. Programs increasing intervention and counseling on domestic violence and conflict would be evaluated and made available. In addition best practices for reducing gang problems, crime, and recidivism rates would be identified. Grants would be available to support all of these areas. A Peace Academy modeled on military academies would train students in peace and require 5 years national or international service after graduation.

The majority of funding would go toward programs in the U.S. and should reduce the societal cost of violence in the country. Interpersonal violence alone has been estimated to cost the U.S. \$300 billion a year plus \$500 billion cost for the victims.

International peace is also extremely important and the U.S. expenditure of \$700 billion annually on military activity might be reduced with a more proactive approach to conflate prevention.

There would be a number of internationally oriented programs. They include: 1) Advocate for a proactive approach to policies that promote conflict resolution and structured mediation of conflict; 2) Deploy unarmed civilians in multinational peacekeeping forces; personnel for peacemaking, administration of post-conflict reconstruction, and demobilization programs; 3) Monitor arms reduction, particularly nuclear arms and space based weapons, and the sales of weapons with analysis of their impact on peace; 4) Support research on the causes of conflict, conflict prevention and the consequences of conflict, and advocate on behalf of women and children victimized by violence and conflict.

A Department of Peace would bring together all of this activity in a coordinated effort with significant funding to have a real impact and save the U.S. many times over the cost of the program. There is a proposal in Congress, H.R.808, with more than 230 cosponsors to create a Department of Peace and the League could help advance and mold the legislation.

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