

7.01: Abuse of Social Security Benefits

Social Security is providing support to children that may not need it. Example: Child has father who pays child support. Mother marries-step father dies-social security pays-step fathers biological child receives reduced benefits. Mother remarries again. Child now living with grandparents still receiving father, stepfather and new stepfathers income. When MN decided to charge the laws on child support they should have looked into what social security is providing as well. No wonder SS has no \$\$.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.1

Comments:

- No links to past Citizens League work.
- Not an appropriate Citizens League topic.
- Weak proposal, without enough information.
- The main concern of this proposal is related to child support overlapping or confounding Social Security benefits. This is perhaps more of a complaint about administrative procedure rather than a policy change.
- The proposal does not provide evidence of the problem, how the problem might be approached, or what impact any recommendations might have.
- Social Security is an issue with growing importance and of interest to Citizens League members, but the proposal needs to further identify the Citizens League's unique ability to contribute to this issue.
- The proposal is slanted toward the belief that Social Security is being "abused." A study would require objective views as well as exploration towards questions surrounding Social Security's viability, current situation, etc.
- This is a federal issue. It should be resolved there, as a part of a comprehensive review.

Idea seems best suited to:

- **Nothing**
- Short-term work group

Conclusions: Not a good project for the Citizens League.

07.02: Long Term Care Follow Up

See 1999 CL report on Long Term Care and MN Journal 23 issue 6, July 2006

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.6

Comments:

- Should try to find a way to connect long term care issues with other Citizens League policy work.\
- More carefully laid out in proposal # 07.05.
- Proposal was vague. Without reading the Journal article it was difficult to know what was being proposed. It might be useful to have a group investigate the feasibility of such a study.
- Long term care funding is an important issue.
- There is growing momentum at the Legislature on this issue.
- Could be done as a part of a more comprehensive study on health care.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Study committee**
- Event/civic engagement opportunity
- Partnership

Related past CL work:

- 1999 Long Term Care Report
- MAP 150 Long Term Care project

Conclusions: The proposal was too vague and leaned on a past article in the Minnesota Journal. As a result, many reviewers didn't feel that they could adequately judge the value of the proposal. Proposal # 07.05 covers much of the same content and was better received by reviewers.

7.03: Regent Selection

The University of Minnesota Regents Selection process is "broken". Legislation enacted in 2005 changed the process to include the Governor who would nominate a candidate for each open position as well as a joint House/Senate committee who would vote on the Governor's nominees. Unfortunately the joint committee approved only one of the four Governor nominees and forwarded the other three to the full legislature without a majority vote. It would appear that the 2005 Legislative action only served to make the Regents selection process even more "politicized".

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2

Comments:

- The Citizens League is well-suited to make recommendations on Regent selection.
- The U of M is a huge asset for Minnesota and selection of Regents should be based on qualifications and a transparent, streamlined and non-partisan process.
- Could use more information on how the Regent selection process affects the quality of higher education in Minnesota – and why it should matter to Minnesota families.
- Not sure how this “procedural” matter would resonate with average citizens.
- The idea of “politicized races” (like judicial elections) is gaining steam in the media.
- This proposal is in line with the good government work of the Citizens League.
- Good idea, but has limited appeal for Citizens League members.
- Proposal does not show evidence that the existing process produces inappropriate Regents or that political affiliation should not be a criterion for selection.
- A short-term working group could accumulate data on key Regent’s decisions, the background of expertise of the Regents who made the decision and the expertise of the University staff, officers and others who provided key input into the decision.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Short-term work group**
- Study committee
- Partnerships (including League of Women Voters)
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Conclusions: It is not clear whether the current process for selecting Regents negatively affects the University of Minnesota, or whether the topic would be of interest to Citizens League members. Nevertheless, the Citizens League is the right organization to tackle this kind of project, with its non-partisan approach and background in good government work.

07.04: Poverty in Minnesota

Identify factors that keep traditional communities of color in poverty at higher rates than immigrant groups. Specifically the poverty rates for African Americans and Native Americans which are the highest have held steady for the last 15 years while other groups (Hispanic & Asian) poverty rates have been falling in MN.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2

Comments:

- This is similar to what the Itasca Project is doing. Would need to be careful to avoid duplication by choosing a different focus.
- The topic is important, but the proposal is too broad. Would need to focus our work to do a good job.
- The proposal needs to be focused and streamlined, but with studies showing the appalling disparities between children of color and white children in Minnesota it is time to collaborate with other organizations on this issue.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Partnership**
- **Study committee**
- Short-term work group
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Related past CL work:

- 1977 Report

Conclusions: The topic of poverty and disparities is very important, but the proposal needs to be more focused. There are good opportunities for partnership on this topic.

07.05: LTC Impact on Government, Communities and Individuals

Examine the impact on government, communities and the individual of the arrival of the baby boomers' at retirement. Many in this age group have not accumulated sufficient savings to support retirement. The state and our communities are unprepared for the impacts including costs and demand on the health care systems and the other systems that serve aging Minnesotans. We will need to examine long term care and look at the needs of caregivers whether family or professional. How will we pay for increased demand for a wide range services? How will we support those who cannot afford retirement? Many in this generation will need financial assistance to survive - Does this mean creating work opportunities, creating additional government or privately funded safety net? We need to rethink housing and transportation in order provide more and longer lived citizens opportunity to stay independent.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.3

Comments:

- The proposal is much larger than long-term care – the scope is too broad.
- Could be combined with proposal # 07.02
- Not sure what the unique value of the Citizens League on this project is.
- Excellent formulation of a very important topic. Would make a very good study committee.
- Many other organizations are working on this topic now. It might be helpful to start with a short-term work group to do a “meta-analysis” of research and findings that are already out there, and then identify gaps or overlaps with recommendations on how to get traction on this issue.
- Potentially a turn-off to younger citizens who are concerned that too many resources are being diverted to the boomer generation.
- The recent Conference of Long Term Financing Solutions already provided broad direction and potential solutions.
- Project is well-defined and very relevant.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Study committee**
- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Partnership
- Short-term work group

Conclusions: Disagreement among reviewers as to whether the proposal was too broad or well-defined. Many other organizations are already doing work in this field; a potential way for the Citizens League to get involved is to conduct a “meta-analysis” of the work that has already been done to identify gaps in knowledge.

07.06: Energy Efficiency and CO₂ Emissions Control

Study and create short and long term proposals for energy efficiency and CO2 emissions control for Minnesota

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.8

Comments:

- There is still a lot of debate in this field, but it would be a good issue to solicit public input on.
- Would need to focus on one single issue; the proposal identifies several possibilities.
- Energy efficiency in general is a critical issue; CO2 emissions control is only one of many issues.
- Proposal needs to be more developed more thoroughly.
- A very good topic for the Citizens League.
- Could begin with a short-term work group that takes stock of where Minnesota is right now in developing energy alternatives to fossil fuels, and make judgments as to whether Minnesota is headed in the right direction.
- There are many organizations looking at this issue; it might be worth compiling a meta-analysis of what's been studied already.
- Consciousness of this issue and interest in energy efficiency have risen dramatically over the past few years, so this project might attract a lot of interest and attention.
- Could partner with high-profile Minnesotans as well as national think-tanks and organizations working in this area.
- There is nothing in this proposal that wasn't covered by the recent energy report.
- The scope of the proposal is too broad. An information-gathering work group on energy efficient building codes for Minnesota might be useful.
- Fleet conversions and CO2 policy are federal issues.

Related past CL work:

- Early 2000s report on energy.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Study committee
- Short-term work group
- Partnerships

Conclusions: The proposal is too broad and addresses federal issues that are traditionally outside the scope of Citizens League work. A good strategy might be to choose a more narrow focus on Minnesota issues. There is a lot of interest in this topic among the public and there might be good opportunities for partnerships.

08.01: Access to Government Information and Informed Citizen Participation

Access to government information, transparency in government, informed citizen participation -- emphasis on state and local information

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2

Comments:

- These are critical issues.
- This is a very broad topic.
- Good fit with Citizens League mission.
- Ties in with current efforts at the Capitol by Rep. Pelowshi to make the legislative process more accessible to the public.
- Need to hone in on a more specific goal – legislation, public spending, campaign contributions?
- Not sure of the policy framing of this.
- It is becoming harder for average citizens to understand what is really going on in the world around them. It makes sense to link these concerns to a root cause – a lack of access to good, credible information.
- Interesting proposal and suggestion of a different kind of “issue”.
- Good idea, but the proposal needs more development.
- Given that the stated goal is to increase public awareness, this should be something other than a study committee.
- Proposal is too abstract.
- Might be a better fit as a part of a larger effort towards good government. A stronger link needs to be drawn to Citizens League work and current projects.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
 - Possible Policy and a Pint
- Short-term work group: 2
- Study committee
- Partnerships

Conclusions: This is an important topic, a good fit with the Citizens League mission and would make a good topic for an event or event series. To become a study committee or working group, the proposal needs more development.

08.02: Ethanol

Promotion of ethanol as a renewable resource. Minnesota has a number of ethanol plants, has plans to build many more, all of which will be state subsidized, has goals for state ethanol use, and is a large corn producer. Research indicates that ethanol may not be the resource that it was originally portrayed to be and may actually cause more harm than good. Examples of issues include: water and oil use, impact on domestic and international corn markets, etc. Therefore, should Minnesota be promoting ethanol let alone investing in it?

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2

Comments:

- Many others are already working on this subject.
- The proposal needs to be developed more thoroughly, but the topic is very good.
- Citizens League could offer an unbiased look at this issue; the current public debate is skewed by environmental, agricultural, energy interests.
- An important issue with many partisan constituencies. Not sure if the Citizens League should take a lead role.
- Could be connected to the energy/CO2 proposal. Would like to see this proposal connected to other alternative fuel issues: wind farms, solar, geothermal, nuclear. Ethanol is the best case study of alternative energy initiatives in Minnesota, but the larger issue is how the state can make embark on these initiatives. It would be very helpful to come to some conclusions about a better, more thoughtful process for deciding which alternative energy projects the state should pursue.
- The Citizens League is better suited to focus on research about ethanol instead of promoting it.
- Too narrow for the Citizens League.
- The facts about this issue are well known. A study of a raw political issue with national and state implications is not a good fit for the Citizens League.
- Interesting and relevant topic – more manageable than the broader CO2 proposal – but the proposal is not well developed.

Related past CL work:

- Early 2000s report on energy.

Idea seems best suited for:

- Short-term working group
- Study committee
- Event

Conclusions: The topic of ethanol is an important one, but the proposal's focus on the promotion of ethanol is not appropriate for a study committee or working group. As written, the proposal might be a good topic for an event. The Citizens League is well-suited to do an analysis of ethanol.

08.03: Health Care Reform Principles
Establish principles for health care reform

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.5

Comments:

- The proposal is too sparse for someone who doesn't know much about health care reform issues to understand.
- Delineating health care reform principles, based on what citizens value most in a health care system, is a good idea.
- The topic is huge and could become too amorphous to have practical applications in the end.
- Might be able to link this proposal to the long-term care proposals.
- Proposal needs to give a better explanation of the "crisis".
- A shared sense of principles for health reform appears at first an easier ask than agreement on a specific piece of legislation, but many would argue that the varying perspectives on reform is precisely what would shape a better reform.
- This could fold into a larger study committee focused on healthcare, but is not enough to serve as a stand-alone group.
- The proposal duplicates other work that has already been done: past Citizens League work, the Health Care Transformation Task Force, demonstrations in Massachusetts, etc. The Citizens League has ongoing work in this area.
- The controversy on this issue is over political values, which is not an appropriate topic for a Citizens League study.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Short-term working group**
- Event/civic engagement opportunity
- Nothing

Conclusions: The proposal duplicates work that has already been done, but some reviewers thought that the focus on values was a good topic. Some thought that the proposal might work better as a part of a study on long-term care or another health topic, rather than as a stand-alone project.

08.04: War on Drugs

My idea would be to study the negative effects that the War on Drugs has caused to society. The hope would be to shed some light on this billion dollar quagmire that is not only failing to stop illegal drug use, it is filling our prisons with non-violent offenders and bankrupting our country. The question is how (and why) can this system that is failing on so many levels continue to be supported?

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.9

Comments:

- This is a national or international issue.
- The proposal begins with an unsupported assumption, but this is an interesting topic and one where public input could raise awareness of the issue and raise useful debate.
- This is an interesting topic. Not familiar with the issues being raised.
- A short-term work group could help narrow the focus.
- An excellent proposal, but I am pessimistic that this topic can be tackled through logic. This topic has been studied in depth by researchers. The research shows that drug abuse has increased under our “supply-side” drug enforcement policies, while available treatment programs have decreased. Research has also shown the financial gain enjoyed by the prison industry under this approach and, at the risk of sounding like a conspiracy nut, there is also evidence that Black communities are more easily kept powerless by incarcerating such a huge proportion of adult males, mostly on drug charges. In spite of all this “rational” evidence, however, average citizens are still unmoved, thanks largely to a counter campaign of fear. If this project could be framed in a unique way, an angle that has not been tried before, that could perhaps break through the public's denial of who really wins and loses, and why the current system perpetuates, then maybe it would be worth a shot.
- This is an issue that has not received much attention in recent history. Not sure if it would fit into CL’s portfolio of work focused less on specific policies versus general areas of policy concern.
- The proposal appears to have a preconceived conclusion.
- A study of alternative models that states and cities are using to address the reduction of drug addiction, the results of those models, and possible solutions would be useful. NYC, for example, has made good progress. Including the possibility of legalization in the scope could be legitimate but is probably too controversial.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Short-term work group
- Study committee
- “Truth-telling” campaign

Conclusions: This is an important topic that hasn’t received much attention lately. The proposal begins with a preconceived conclusion, but an objective study the efficacy of the War on Drugs and possible models for reducing drug addiction might be a good topic.

08.05: Youth During Non-School Hours

What youth do in the non-school hours is critical to their learning and development - as well as their sense of citizenship. European countries often use this time to build stronger, more engaged citizens. I would like to see the Citizens League stimulate wide ranging conversations about what is known about community learning opportunities in the non-school hours and how we as citizens, community leaders, and elected officials can make sure that Minnesota's opportunity gap is recognized and seriously addressed through new forms of public - private - and personal partnerships.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.22

Comments:

- Good focused proposal.
- Many school districts and etc. would be interested in this issue. Would have to find demonstrated results from these programs.
- A short-term work group could help to focus the proposal.
- Replicates work that is already being done by the University of Minnesota.
- This would be most beneficial as an awareness-raising event series.
- The proposer seems to indicate that a partnership with the U extension center for youth development would be welcomed.
- Would HIGHLY recommend that any project on this topic make a deliberate effort to include youth themselves as the leaders of the conversation; their perspective is critical.
- Youth activities during the summer are often very expensive; addressing cost as a barrier would be key.
- This topic is asset-oriented instead of deficit-oriented, a nice counter-balance to many of the more disheartening topics we must tackle.
- Youth development is critical, and while Students Speak Out is addressing the concerns of youth while IN school, there also needs be a dialogue regarding the opportunities for young people outside of the classroom. A series of conversations sound like a great and may allow for CL to partner with numerous entities mentioned in the proposal as well as the MN Youth Work Coalition.
- Interesting proposal, but other organizations are already investigating this.
- There are models available to study.
- Partnering options could be attractive.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- **Partnerships**
- Short-term work group

Conclusions: This is an important topic, but many other organizations are already working on it. It might be a good opportunity to partner with these organizations.

08.06: Comprehensive Policy on Youth

The public and policy makers do not understand the value and possibilities for better comprehensive youth policy -- policy that looks at the investments we make during the first 2 decades of life because they are stuck in silos. A study group from different sectors needs to review and consider new ways to assure all youth can succeed at work, college, life and citizenship by age 21.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.9

Comments:

- This topic is too broad. Instead, we should concentrate on proposal # 08.05.
- Proposal needs to be more thoroughly developed.
- Because the University is already launching a study on this, the best role for the Citizens League would be to supplement their effort with the project suggested in # 08.05. We could hone in on the citizenship aspect of youth policy and make reference to needed policy on community learning opportunities that lead to citizenship development.
- There are a variety of youth-serving organizations that might appreciate this forum to discuss their paradigms, research and efforts, including the Search Institute and the National Youth Leadership Council might be interested in this topic.
- The Citizens League should step up its engagement and youth outreach efforts – this project, and # 08.05, could engage young people.
- It's not clear how this would be accomplished, but the possibility of partnering with the University deserves exploration.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Partnerships**
- Short-term working group
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Conclusions: The proposal is too broad, but this might be a good opportunity to partner with the University of Minnesota and expand Citizens League youth outreach efforts. The previous proposal on youth during non-school hours is better focused; a good partnership might be to do that study as a supplement to the University's comprehensive study.

08.07: Judicial Selection

Judicial elections across the country have become increasingly partisan, increasingly expensive and influenced by special interests, and extremely negative. Minnesota is one of only two states where there have been no negative television ads in judicial races. The policy question is whether Minnesota should retain its system of selecting its judges with most judges initially appointed by the governor and contested elections thereafter, where sitting incumbent judges and judicial candidates are now allowed to state their views on issues that may come before the courts and personally raise money for their campaigns.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.56

Comments:

- The Citizens League has already done this.
- The timing for such a project is good.
- There are many local partners invested in this topic: League of Women Voters, Citizens for an Impartial Judiciary, etc.
- The importance of this topic is analogous to the redistricting study.
- This topic is relevant to many but not broadly discussed. A review of other state's systems would be a good Citizens League study.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Short-term working group**
- Partnerships
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Related past Citizens League work

- March 2008 Report from Judicial Selection Working Group

Conclusions: This is an important and timely topic, but a working group of the Policy Advisory Committee has already addressed this topic earlier this year.

08.08: Mental Health and Disability of Eastern European Religious Refugees in Minnesota

Eastern European Medical Society (EEMS) needs a forum to bring information about the health disparity of recent Russian-speaking religious refugees in the Metropolitan area to the attention of state, county and city policymakers.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.56

Comments:

- This is a good proposal, but it seems to have been proposed by a group that already knows the outcome and wants to partner with the Citizens League to better publicize its own work.
- This proposal has narrow interest to the broader public.
- Very interesting, but not a Citizens League topic.
- This could fit into a broader conversation on the health care challenges of Minnesota's refugee communities.
- Would need to involve refugees in such a project.
- It seems they are looking for a lobbyist – they say that public awareness is secondary to decision-maker awareness.
- This looks like a grant proposal.
- The group that submitted this proposal could participate in a larger conversation about Minnesota's changing demographics.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Study committee
- Short-term working group
- Partnership
- Nothing

Conclusions: The proposal is very well developed but has a very narrow interest to the broader community and is not an appropriate topic for a Citizens League study.

08.09: K-14 Plan

Develop a Minnesota plan for a K-14 system in which secondary school students (grades 9-12) have an easier time transitioning to technical training at an earlier age instead of being forced either (1) to do conventional academic work through grade 12, or (2) drop out for lack of interest, motivation, skills, availability of other options, or knowledge of how to gain access to other options.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.1

Comments:

- An important topic that could be combined with study proposal on Minnesota's Higher Education Funding Systems.
- A better education system is of interest to the general populace. This idea is particularly relevant for strengthening MN's workforce as the economy is stressed and the population demographic shifts.
- Hard to get past the rhetoric
- This seems like a pre-determined solution looking for a forum to advocate it, rather than a topic to be explored critically and openly.
- The work force "pipeline" issue is of critical importance to the future well being of MN. Agree that a K-14 program could be helpful.
- This is a good proposal for study – the obsolescence of high schools is a worrying phenomenon. There is interest in many camps on this issue.
-

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Study committee**
- Short-term workgroup research
- Events and partnerships

Major hurdles: This discussion is in the midst of a heated debate.

Conclusions: This is an important topic that should be considered combining with proposal 8.15.

08.10: HIV/AIDS

It has been 20 years (1988) since the Citizen's League looked at the issue of stopping HIV(AIDS) in Minnesota. During that period of time, the numbers of individuals living with HIV has increased dramatically, largely due to the medications that keep the mortality rates low. As a result, more Minnesotans than ever before are living with a communicable disease for which there is no comprehensive public health education plan coming from government or the private sector.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.6

Comments:

- Important social, economic and political problem. A study on the barriers to effective programs and use of them could be useful.
- This is an issue that deserves revisiting, and follow-up with the 1988 Citizens League work would be helpful.
- The research and potential partners could be further explored – MN AIDS Project, etc.
- Opportunity for CL to provide neutral leadership.
- Very great proposal. Public health issues are an interesting cross-over between healthcare and education. If the data are already in - that HIV cases in MN are still increasing, and that they are disproportionately affecting communities of color, then this would make for a good public conversation - more need for preventative healthcare, more need to hear voices from communities of color for ideas on solutions.
- Not sure if this issue rises to the level of a Study Group.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Partnership with MN AIDS Project.**
- A civic engagement or an event or series.
- Public conversation.

Conclusions: This is a great proposal about an important social issue. Revisiting the CL work done in 1988 would be useful, but a study group may not be necessary. This project seems more suited to be a partnership project that involves civic engagement and/or an event.

08.11: Beyond Market Reform in Health Care

What does market reform in the provision of medical care address and what doesn't it address in our current health care system? With such a long history in health care access and market reform, the Citizens League should examine whether market reform can be the entire solution in health care or if it is really just part of the solution and whether there are specific issues that market reform does not address very well (access, portability, etc.). With the passage of significant market reform legislation in 2008, these questions should be addressed as the implementation of market reforms begin.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2

Comments:

- Not clear exactly what proposal is seeking – assessing whether market reforms can solve problems with US health care system? Might be better to wait a couple of years to see how current health reform efforts pan out.
- Could be combined with proposal # 08.03.
- Not at this time – a duplication of prior efforts. As the proposal states there already is voluminous literature available, which is sufficient to analyze the policy options, their costs and benefits. I doubt that a CL analysis would add value to the analyses already available. Issues of access, portability etc have been addressed by the Health Care Access Commission Report.
- Seems an ideal topic for the Citizens League and could neatly follow from the previous Citizens League work mentioned in the proposal.
- Should be looked at along with other healthcare topics in studies or conversations.
- While the issue of market reform or reform of single payer is an important issue, it would need to address a broad range of market reforms in place and being proposed.
- A cost/benefit analysis of options for MN could be useful but given the many options that would need to be studied it would be a very big study, probably too big.
- This more specific focus seems more productive than 8.03, but would have to be very carefully and objectively framed to make a useful contribution to the debate.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Study committee
- Short-term working group

Conclusions: Reviewers disagreed about whether the Citizens League could make a useful contribution on this topic.

08.12: Sales Tax Reform

Minnesota has two major revenue sources for general spending on the state level, the income tax and the sales tax. Minnesota's sales tax was established in 1967 and is still based today on the idea that retail purchases are the primary transaction to which the sales tax applies. As the economy in Minnesota and in the nation becomes more service-based, large sectors of economic activity are exempt from the sales tax. Even on a retail sales basis, Minnesota has always had a narrower sales tax base than most other states with sales tax exemptions for food, clothing and gasoline. Add this to exemptions on many services and Minnesota must apply a higher sales tax rate to what is taxed and still ends up with a more volatile base from which to budget from.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.5

Comments:

- Would have to ensure this does not duplicate work being done by MN Taxpayers Association.
- A very intriguing proposal. My only concern would be the point made by the submitter that this topic might be less interesting to newer members. Any project with the word tax in the title is destined to make a few eyes glaze over. I would not call this project "sales tax reform." It seems to be more of a reconceptualization of how we tax - that is, "taxing differently."
- Citizens League has a history of work on tax policy.
- High potential for visibility and interest in economic research organizations and think-tanks.
- This is an important issue, but should the Citizens League be on the front lines?
- Would first need to define the criteria for improvement, before working on a project on improving tax policy.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Study committee**
- Event/civic engagement opportunity
- Short-term working group
- Partnership

Conclusions: This is an interesting proposal in a subject area that the Citizens League has a lot of history and expertise in. There is a lot of potential for visibility on this topic, which may or may not be desirable. The topic might not be appealing to Citizens League members who are not familiar with our past work in this area.

08.13: Judicial Transparency

Judicial transparency.

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 1.9

Comments:

- Overturned appeals is all that should be tracked.
- Not clear what the proposal seeks to do – name and shame bad judges? Think this merits more work to come up with a metric but would be leery of “making judges accountable” while endorsing judicial impartiality.
- Not sure how important this is.
- The proposal sounds like it comes from a personal agenda.
- The proposal was too vague to understand what specifically was being proposed. It’s not clear what policy issue this relates to.
- Could tie into judicial independence efforts (including proposal # 08.07) in terms of informing public about roles, responsibilities, and record of judges and judicial candidates.
- It is not clear what a statistical ranking of judges based on workload and appeal record would change. What is the desired improvement?

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Event/civic engagement opportunity**
- Study committee
- Short-term working group
- Partnership
- Nothing

Conclusions: It is unclear what the proposal seeks to do. It might be able to be combined with proposal # 08.07 on judicial selection.

08.14: Charter Schools

In 1988, the Citizens League released the report "Chartered Schools = Choices for Educators + Quality for All Students". This report kick-started the charter school movement in Minnesota, and eventually throughout the country. 20 years after the Citizens League report on charter schools, the charter school movement has become a significant presence in Minnesota's educational landscape, but questions about the schools' purposes and efficacy remain. The Citizens League should review what has happened since the 1988 charter school report. Have the schools solved the problems they were proposed to solve? What new innovations have occurred since the original legislation was passed? How successful are charter schools? What problems do they have, and how can those problems be solved?

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Scott Halstead, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.8

Comments:

- This is a good focused proposal with clear goals – it is CL's child after all, and we should take responsibility for assessing its success and its flaws.
- This needs to be done in a non-partisan environment and CL is perfect for this.
- Builds on Citizens League expertise.
- Might it be possible to come up with additional measures of success that are not standardized, such as student satisfaction with their educational experience, development of social awareness or commitment to community?
- Charter schools are a significant part of education in Minnesota and should be reviewed in order to understand the role they play in that landscape. In particular, how they support students of color, immigrants, non-traditional students, etc.
- Good idea, but the proposal focuses on input from charter school advocates. Would need to frame the project objectively.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Short-term working group**
- Study committee
- Partnership
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Links to past Citizens League work

- 1988 report

Conclusions: This is a good topic for the Citizens League, because of the significance of charter schools in our past work. The study could be undertaken as a short-term working group or full study committee. In either case, we would need to be sure to frame the topic objectively.

08.15: Minnesota's Higher Education Funding Systems

As the cost of public and private higher education has skyrocketed in recent years, Minnesota's systems of financial aid have been strained. Increases in available aid have not kept up with increases in tuition and families are finding it more and more difficult to pay for their students' education. The Citizens League should undertake a soup-to-nuts review of how higher education is paid for in Minnesota: What do students and families pay out-of-pocket? How much should we be asking them to pay? Should we have differential rates for in-state and out-of-state students? What public dollars do Minnesota's public institutions of higher education receive? Where do those dollars come from? How are they distributed among our public campuses? Can the systems for deciding how these funds are distributed be changed? What public dollars do Minnesota's private colleges and universities receive? Where do those dollars come from? What effects do public dollars have on tuition rates at private institutions of higher education?

Reviewers: John Adams, David Alden, Ellen Benavides, Janna Caywood, Bright Dornblaser, Robert Freeman, Lacey Hartman, Paul Taylor, Diane Tran.

Average overall score: 2.8

Comments:

- This is a timely and important topic.
- Would be good to look at CA's public university system, analyze the pros and cons of how it's funded, and consider if a similar approach would be viable or appropriate in Minnesota.
- This is a much-neglected topic, especially in recent years.
- Tuition increases every year and thereby leaves more students out of the running to obtain further education. Understanding the trends in MN comparable to the rest of the country, specific to the private colleges and the state systems, can help shed light on what changes need to be made.
- Recent controversy over private financial aid companies relationships' with college financial aid officers might be another area to focus on.
- There is significant subject matter expertise within the Citizens League on this topic.
- The proposal includes several distinct issues: amount of resources, how resources are distributed, consequences of resource distribution. Needs to be more focused.
- The study needs to identify the benefits and consequences of no improvement and needs to address the relative priority in this era of state budget deficits.
- Would benefit from further shaping of the proposal by a working group.

Idea seems best suited for:

- **Study committee**
- Partnership
- Event/civic engagement opportunity

Conclusions: This is a very important and timely topic. The topic needs to be focused before launching a study committee.