



September 3, 2023

To: West Virginia University Board of Governors
E. Gordon Gee, President
Maryanne Reed, Provost

The League of Women Voters of West Virginia (LWVWV) opposes the cuts proposed for the faculty, staff, degrees, and course offerings of West Virginia University (WVU). We also oppose the punitive manner in which these cuts are being implemented and the obvious efforts to downplay the adverse impacts on the university, the community, and the state.

West Virginia has the lowest educational attainment of any state in the U.S. The LWVWV supports higher education opportunities in West Virginia, because we recognize the importance of a well-informed, thoughtful electorate. Critical thinking is key to a functioning democracy. A university education should promote the healthy exchange of ideas and viewpoints among a diverse student body. Offering a broad array of options promotes this concept; restricting courses of study in the manner proposed does not.

Oddly, WVU is blaming the need for cuts on declining enrollment at the same time several other universities in the state are reporting significant enrollment increases. Cutting educational offerings at WVU will only diminish the variety of students attracted to WVU and our state. This will result in further declines in enrollment and accelerate a frightening downward spiral.

Moreover, limiting degree and course options — for foreign languages, graduate-level math, public administration, to name just a few — will drive even more West Virginia students out of state, when they can afford to go. Many, probably most, will never return. Contributing to further population loss and brain drain should not become the legacy of West Virginia's land grant university.

WVU is the flagship of our state and students deserve the opportunity to explore a broad range of courses — as majors, minors, and electives — to prepare them for a globalized world. We urge the Board of Governors and WVU Administration to pause current "transformation" processes and explore other ways to address budget shortfalls. A jewel once shattered cannot be restored.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Archer".

Julie Archer
President
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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan volunteer organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate, but is engaged in local, state, and national issues of importance to our communities. The League works to influence public policy through advocacy and education. League membership is open to all (not just women) age 16 or older. More at: www.lwv.org (National) and www.lwvwwv.org (WV).