



**Introduction to the League of Women Voters  
October 18, 2021**

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## League Foundations

Who We Are - <https://www.lwv.org/about-us>

\*The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

[League of Women Voters United States \(LWVUS\)](#)

\*The League of Women Voters of the United States encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

[League of Women Voters Education Fund \(LWVEF\)](#)

\*The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to register voters, provide voters with election information through voters' guides as well as candidate forums and debates.

### Mission, Vision, Values, and Principles

MISSION - Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

VISION - We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

VALUES - We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy

PRINCIPLES (from Impact on Issues 2020-2022) <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues> -

In addition to positions on public policy issues, Impact on Issues lists the League's Principles. These are broad "concepts of government" to which the League subscribes. They can serve as a basis for support for: responsible, responsive, efficient, representative government; protection of the right to vote of every citizen; support for free public education; and international cooperation, for example. However, since they are broadly worded, caution should be used in applying them to specific issues.

- The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.
- The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible.
- The League of Women Voters believes every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.
- The League of Women Voters believes efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.
- The League of Women Voters believes responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.
- The League of Women Voters believes cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

#### Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

## History

### The League of Women Voters Organization

Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has been an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that people should play a critical role in democracy. The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920 just six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified giving women the right to vote.

Throughout the years, the League has continued its dual purposes of education and advocacy, engaging in studies on representative government, international relations, natural resources, and social policy.

(From **Impact on Issues 2020-2022** - <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues> )

For 100 years, we have been a nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy. See what we've been up to over the last century, and see where we're headed for the next.

### **1920 — 2020**

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. That's been our vision since 1920, when the League of Women Voters was founded by leaders of the women's suffrage movement. For 100 years, we have been a nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy.

#### **1920 -**

#### **FEBRUARY 14: LWV Founded**

The League was officially founded in Chicago in 1920, just six months before the 19th amendment was ratified and women won the vote. Formed by the suffragists of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

#### **AUGUST 26**

#### **9th Amendment Ratified**

After it passed in the House and Senate, the final hurdle for the 19th Amendment was ratification by the states. As anti-suffrage groups still fought to oppose ratification, suffrage leaders mobilized to continue their pressure campaign in the states. Finally, the Amendment was ratified in Tennessee and officially made law on August 26.

### **1944 — 45**

#### **UN Established & LWV Named NGO Observer**

After World War II, the League carried out a nationwide public support campaign, at the request of President Franklin Roosevelt, to establish the United Nations and to ensure U.S. participation. Following the campaign, President Harry Truman invited the League to serve as a consultant to the U.S. delegation at the United Nations Charter Conference. One of the first organizations officially recognized by the UN as a non-governmental organization (NGO), the League still maintains official observer status today.

### **1957**

#### **LWV Education Fund Established**

As the League became more active in issue advocacy, the need arose for a separate organizational arm for activities like voter registration and information. The League of Women Voters Education Fund was established to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

### **1972**

#### **Major Campaign to Ratify the ERA**

In 1972, shortly after congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), LWV voted officially to support "equal rights for all regardless of sex." The League followed this vote with a nationwide pressure campaign that continued through the 1970s. That national campaign ended in 1982, but LWV continues to push for ERA ratification today.

**1976****Emmy Award for Presidential Debates**

The League sponsored the first televised presidential debates since 1960, for which we received an Emmy award for Outstanding Achievement in Broadcast Journalism.

**1980s****LWV Sponsors Presidential Debates**

The League sponsored televised general election Presidential debates in 1980 and 1984, as well as presidential primary forums in 1980, 1984, and 1988. The debates focused on nonpartisan issues with a main goal of informing voters. As candidates demanded increasingly partisan conditions, however, the League withdrew its sponsorship of general election debates in 1988. Leagues around the country continue to hold debates and forums for local and state offices today.

**1993****NVRA Becomes Law**

The League's grassroots campaign for national legislation to reform voter registration resulted in passage of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), also known as the "motor-voter" bill. The goal: increase accessibility to the electoral process. The motor-voter bill enabled citizens to register at motor vehicle agencies automatically, as well as by mail and at agencies that service the public.

**2002****HAVA Becomes Law**

When the 2000 election exposed the many problems facing the election system, the League began to work on election reform. Working closely with a civil rights coalition, LWV helped draft and pass the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which established provisional balloting, requirements for updating voting systems, and the Election Assistance Commission.

**2006****LWV Launches VOTE411.org**

The League provided a dedicated website for voter information as early as the 1990s. In 2006, the League launched the next generation of online voter education with VOTE411.org, a "one-stop-shop" for election-related information. Today, VOTE411 provides both general and state-specific nonpartisan resources to the voting public, including a nationwide polling place locator, a ballot look-up tool, candidate positions on issues, and more.

**2019****LWV Launches People Powered Fair Maps Campaign**

In June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that partisan gerrymandering cannot be solved by the federal courts. In response, the League initiated People Powered Fair Maps, a coordinated effort across all 50 states and D.C. to create fair and transparent, people-powered redistricting processes to eliminate partisan and racial gerrymandering nationwide.

**2020****LWV Celebrates 100 Years**

February 14th, 2020, marks 100 years that the League of Women Voters has empowered voters and defended democracy. Over the last century, we've fought for election protection, democratic reforms, and equal access to the ballot—all while maintaining our commitment to nonpartisanship and fostering an informed electorate. As we look into our next hundred years, we aim to build power for the next generation of women leaders and voting rights activists. That's why we're celebrating our 100-year milestone with a nationwide coordinated Day of Action called Women Power the Vote.

(From LWV.org (9/2021) - <https://www.lwv.org/about-us/history>)

### League of Women Voters of Wyoming

From the League of Women of Wyoming State Program Record 1957-2019 -

<http://www.wyominglww.org/StateMaterials/ProgramRecord/ProgramRecord2019.pdf>

Equal suffrage for women, ratified in 1920 as the 19th Amendment, led to immediate organization of the LWVUS. This new organization's objective was to educate women to their new responsibilities of full citizenship. Gradually Leagues were organized in communities across the country; by 1954 there were four units in Wyoming. The state League began with the first state convention in Worland in June 1957. Bylaws were adopted, and directors for the League of Women Voters of Wyoming (LWVWY) were elected.

As a requirement for recognition by the LWVUS, a "Know Your State" study was completed. Information gathered in this study was published in a booklet entitled "A Look at Wyoming Government." This was the first state League publication for general distribution. It was revised in book form as A Look at Wyoming Government 1970, 75, 79, 89 and 2006. The 2006 edition was also made available on a CD.

## What League is and What League does

<http://www.wyominglww.org/StateMaterials/AboutUsSecs/what-league-is.html>

We are nonpartisan and never either support or oppose political parties or individual candidates.—We do research issues and come to consensus on our position, for which we then advocate actively. We encourage informed participation in the political process by all citizens.

When we want to adopt a position regarding an issue and then take action either for or against legislation affecting that issue, we require all the local Leagues, at the town or county level, to study that issue and come to consensus within themselves as to what position to adopt. Local Leagues report consensus to state Leagues, which in turn report to the national board. The national position is thus crafted through the research and debate of thousands of League members all over the country and all facts and conclusions checked repeatedly.

At election time many local Leagues formulate questions on local issues for all candidates for an office and solicit answers which must be of the same length. These answers are then published, often with the cooperation of the local news media or local businesses, or posted on-line on Vote411 and league websites, in a Voters' Guide, so that voters can find out, in the candidates' own words, what candidates think about those issues. Only two Wyoming local leagues currently put out Voters' Guides. We also organize forums in which voters can ask questions of the candidates and afterwards have an opportunity for one-on-one discussions. We also assist in voter registration drives, rides to polls, and "Please don't forget to Vote" signs and advertisements.

We have welcomed men as members for many years, but we preserve the name "League of Women Voters" for historical reasons. If you are interested in learning about issues in your locality, if you want to participate in the political process and advocate on issues, if you want to promote an informed electorate and encourage citizens to exercise their right to vote, the League is for you. In Wyoming every vote is tremendously powerful.



**Taking Action - Working Together to Influence Public Policy** - excerpts from Impact on Issues, A Guide to Public Policy Positions 2020-2022  
<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>

The League publication, Impact on Issues is designed to help League members use LWVUS public policy positions effectively at the national, state, local, and regional levels. Impact on Issues has been organized so that “Taking Action” is front and center followed by the League Principles. Then, for quick reference, the LWVUS public policy Positions in Brief summarize the more detailed positions in the sections that follow.

A clear understanding of LWVUS positions, how they interrelate, and how they can complement and reinforce state, local, and regional Inter-League Organization (ILO) positions, strengthens the League’s impact on issues at all levels of government. In applying LWVUS positions to national, state, local, and regional issues, each appropriate League board—depending on the level of action—is responsible for determining whether member understanding and agreement exists and whether the action makes sense in terms of timing, need, and effectiveness.

In the League, we tend to focus our efforts on influencing legislative measures in the U.S. Congress and state and local legislative bodies by preparing testimony, lobbying legislators, and initiating advocacy campaigns on issues of interest to our members. At the same time, we file lawsuits and amicus briefs in court cases and monitor and comment when regulations are being written for executive branch agencies. The following guidelines apply to all these activities.

#### Guidelines for taking action

The goal is to work collaboratively among the levels of League with consistent messages and strategies. Effective advocacy efforts on national issues depend on a partnership at all League levels—lobbying in Washington and constituent lobbying at home. This reinforces the League’s impact in influencing national and state legislation.

#### Working Together to Influence Public Policy

The process used in formulating positions and acting at the grassroots level makes the League unique and sets the League apart from other organizations. The fact that we are members not only of a local League, but of a state League, and of the League of Women Voters of the United States, makes us a powerful force.

#### Speaking with One Voice

“Speaking with one voice” is one of the most important tenets of the League. The national League is responsible for determining strategies and action policies that ensure that the League’s message on national issues is consistent throughout the country. Similarly, state Leagues are responsible for a consistent state message, and local Leagues must cooperate with one another to ensure that regional issues are addressed in a manner consistent with neighboring Leagues. Typically, the president of the national, state, or local League is the only person who speaks for the League in an official capacity, unless another person has been designated as the official spokesperson on a specific issue. This may be a League expert, a senior staff person, or a former board member. The key is that this designation is explicitly made by the appropriate Board. This helps to ensure that the League speaks with one voice, which is essential for our effectiveness as an advocacy and lobbying organization.

#### Voter Service

The League’s nonpartisan voter services activities and lobbying activities must be kept separate, and voters’ guides and other voter service materials and publications must not contain statements of League positions.

### League lobbying

League lobbying is based on member study and agreement on selected issues and involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions. League Boards at every level set their own priorities. League lobbying promotes or opposes specific pieces of legislation. The LWVUS public policy positions are the official statements of positions for each issue area and reflect the Program adopted by the most recent national convention.

### Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy is a broader concept than lobbying. Advocacy activities are often considered “educational.” This is the case even when only one side of an issue is presented if no action on a piece of legislation is requested. Such activities can include: 1) developing public policy briefs that analyze issues and provide detailed information and recommendations for addressing them through specific reforms and 2) providing forums for discussing issues and educating policymakers and the public. Speaking in support of the organization is also advocating, i.e., for the overall cause of the organization.

Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation, both legislation that has been introduced and specific legislation that has been proposed. Lobbying includes actions that transmit a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs, as well as action urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation. It also includes communications to the general public expressing a view on specific referenda or other ballot measures.

### Applying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Lens to Our Work

The DEI lens is a way of examining a Program, a process, a product, or otherwise in relation to how it will be perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives, and what barriers may exist that are preventing it from being equitable or inclusive to everyone. All League work should be examined through this lens to best ensure that we are reaching the full diversity within League communities and are being equitable and inclusive in how we approach and execute our work. Applying a DEI lens asks that you consider the following key questions:

- Who is involved in the process? Leagues should consider whether this work impacts a group or community, and is their voice represented and how diverse is the group of decision makers who represent a variety of relevant viewpoints.
- Who will be impacted? Leagues should consider who benefits from this, how it helps meet the needs of underserved voters, and how we address various specific marginalized groups and how they'll be impacted.
- What are the intended and unintended outcomes? Leagues should consider the issue we are trying to solve, what we hope will happen, what the potential negative impacts are, who could be hurt by this, what data or evidence supports this, and how might this be perceived by others.
- Does this align with our vision for an equitable and inclusive organization? Leagues should consider how equity is addressed, what barriers might this place in the way of achieving equity, and how this impacts the organization's culture.
- What changes could be made to make this more equitable? Leagues should consider what the short and long-term goals are, what policies or bylaws need to be added or amended, what the benefits to members are, and what the benefits are for partners and/or members of the community.

DEI lens resources are available at: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/dei-resources/dei-lens> for inclusion in leagues' planning documents.

Leagues should be aware that this process will take more time in the beginning, but as the DEI lens is regularly applied it will become easier to move through the questions, identify opportunities, and react in a way that bolsters DEI. In instances where Leagues go through the questions and find that the DEI lens is not present fully or partially, Leagues should work to include as many factors as possible and consider obstacles that led to gaps in one area versus others and how to continue to build upon this work anytime the League is taking action. When applying the DEI lens to events, Leagues should consult the DEI checklist, [https://www.lwv.org/sites/defBault/files/2019-10/deichecklist\\_module2.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/defBault/files/2019-10/deichecklist_module2.pdf).

### Advocacy at the National Level

Establishing National Priorities to guide its work in Congress, the LWVUS Board adopts lobbying priorities every year. The goal is to maintain focus on issues of primary importance identified by LWVUS. The goals are to:

- Project a focused and consistent message,
- Enhance the League's effectiveness and impact,
- Build the League's credibility and visibility,
- Ensure that the League has sufficient issue and political expertise,
- Reflect Program decisions made at convention and/or council,
- Build on strong member interest and support, and
- Enable the League to manage resources effectively.

### LWVUS Advocacy Team

This team, working in collaboration with the LWVUS Board, is responsible for developing and implementing strategies for lobbying and advocating on national issues. LWVUS staff lobbyists carry out the day-to-day monitoring and action plans for the League and oversee the LWVUS Lobby Corps.

### Action Alerts

Based on League priorities, the LWVUS advocacy team sends out regular Action Alerts detailing the subject under consideration, the proposed action steps, and the individuals to be contacted. Action Alerts are sent to the League's online grassroots supporter list and state and local League presidents who are expected to respond with the appropriate action.

### LWVUS Lobby Corps

The Lobby Corps (LC) is made up of Washington, DC-area League member volunteers who lobby each month when Congress is in session.

Added note: Wyoming has a Lobby Corps rep who is glad to learn more about us and meet with staff together.

The LWVUS advocacy staff acts as liaisons between LWV lobbyists on Capitol Hill and local and state Leagues. Advocacy staff works with LWV leaders and activists in targeted states and congressional districts to help develop and implement grassroots lobbying strategies.

### Grassroots Lobbying

The LWVUS online grassroots support list provides another good way for Leagues to keep in contact with Members of Congress (MOC). This online network of activists sends the League message to Congress in a highly effective way. League members with email addresses are automatically enrolled in this list. The list also includes activists and other interested members of the public who believe in the League's mission.

### State and Local Advocacy/Lobbying on LWVUS Priority Issues

Once LWVUS has identified its advocacy priorities, state and local Leagues are requested to act on those issues under guidance from LWVUS. Optimally, state and local Leagues should encourage members to contact their national legislators on key League national issues; their action greatly enhances the League's clout. Lobbying in Washington is vitally important, but direct lobbying of MOCs by constituents often is the key to persuading them to support the League's position. The arguments that League leaders and members make to their Representative or Senators can make the difference in how they vote. MOCs return to their states or districts regularly during congressional recesses. This is a good time to schedule meetings with them or to talk with them at public events.

On key issues LWVUS may call on League presidents to take state specific actions before critical votes in Congress. LWV presidents also will receive sample messages to be used on issues on which the organization is actively lobbying. Each state and local League president is expected to take whatever official action is requested in response to the requests.

### Local Leagues and Members

While the LWVUS Board takes the lead in national action and keeps League action synchronized with the U.S. Congress, there is a role for every League in national legislation in many circumstances. For example, when responding to an LWVUS Action Alert, a local League president would send a message on behalf of the organization (i.e. on League letterhead). Members are also encouraged to respond to Action Alerts, noting their League affiliation.

### Sharing Information

Whenever state or local Leagues succeed in communicating with their MOC or their staff, it is very beneficial to send a report to the advocacy team at LWVUS.

### State and Local Action on Non-Priority Federal Issues

A state or local League wishing to act on an issue at the national level that is not a priority of the national board must consult with the LWVUS. The state League must support a local League's action request. Leagues and League members must lobby only their own legislators. Individual members are welcome to act on their own behalf without any mention of or attribution to the League. Actions affecting other Leagues must be coordinated with those Leagues. When action is considered at the regional level, all the Leagues in the affected region must be part of the decision-making. LWVUS often helps to facilitate such regional efforts, particularly when the situation involves federal law.

### Federal Action Request Form

For League convenience and to ensure a prompt reply, LWVUS has developed an online form that goes directly to the advocacy team at LWVUS. The Federal Action Request Form should be used any time Leagues would like to act at the federal level or are contemplating litigation in the federal courts. The form can be found on the LWVUS League Management Site at the following URL: <https://www.lwv.org/federal-action-request-form>

As part of the consultation process, the state/local League needs to provide the following information in writing:

- The proposed action and the message to be conveyed.
- The LWVUS position on which the action is based.
- The timeline for sending the message or signing the letter.
- Evidence that the issue is a priority for that state or local League.
- Any relevant additional supporting documents.

The LWVUS staff will review and consult as needed with the LWVUS Board regarding the action request to determine that it is consistent with League positions and that it will not interfere with LWVUS action on a priority issue or issues.

### State and Local Action Using Impact on Issues

Using National Positions at the Regional, State, and Local Level both the Principles (broad statements of beliefs) and Positions (specific statements and guidelines) can be used at the state and local level to develop support for actions taken at those levels. Impact on Issues, while often citing the federal level of government, is also designed as a guide to encourage state and local Leagues to develop plans for acting at the community level.

League positions at the national level are by their very nature broad and general in scope: they are guides for acting. Local Leagues are responsible for determining action at the local level, and state Leagues are responsible for determining action at the state level and ensuring that the action is consistent throughout the state. Therefore, state and local Leagues must determine that members understand and generally agree with actions taken based on League positions; they should ensure that the action reflects the unique circumstances of the affected community. As with other action, when there are ramifications beyond a League's own governmental jurisdiction, that League must consult other Leagues that may be affected.

Typical actions include any effort aimed at influencing a decision on a federal issue, such as communicating with an elected or appointed official, joining a coalition, taking part in a press conference or rally, or writing a letter-to-the-editor.

### Acting in the Community

Interpretation of a League position is the responsibility of the board wishing to use a position. Local League boards are responsible for interpreting local, state, and/or national positions before acting. State boards interpret state, regional, and/or national positions; the national board interprets national positions.

Interpretation may be influenced by local conditions. LWVUS staff is available for consultation related to national positions. A League contemplating action on a community issue should consider the following questions:

- Does the League have a position that supports the proposed action?
- Is there broad member understanding and agreement?
- Is it a priority for the League?
- Does the League have a unique role to play or a chance to take the lead?
- Are other organizations or a coalition already working on the issue?
- Is this the best use of the League's resources (time and money) or would they be better spent on other activities?
- Is the timing right? Is action likely in the present time frame?
- What kind of community involvement would best support the League's efforts?

## **League Organization** - Excerpts from **League Basics – 2009** (latest/last publication date)

<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/league-basics.pdf> and corrections to conform to current LWVUS bylaws

While there are fundamental similarities among Leagues everywhere, each League has its own special characteristics. The size, distribution and demographics of membership; time and money resources; and community/state issues all affect the structure and operations of a League.

The league publication, League Basics, contains essential policy and organizational information applicable to every local and state League. The LWV Web site <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/manage-your-league> offers suggestions, advice, guidelines and more detailed information to help leaders develop specific methods of operation to enable a League to accomplish its goals.

### Board of Directors (compiled from League Basics and LWV Management site)

The board of directors is the administrative and policymaking team for the League. They have no special privileges, prerogatives, or authority and must meet in formal sessions to make organizational decisions. All members of the board are responsible for planning and decision-making.

General expectations:

- Know and respect the leagues' missions, visions, values, beliefs, intentions, purposes, goals, policies, Programs, bylaws, procedures and strengths.
- Set priorities and goals for the league.
- Welcome information and seek the best available advice, but reserve the right to arrive at decisions independently.
- Comply with the nonpartisan policy, asking the board for guidance when a situation is unclear.
- Exercise prudence in the expenditure of the leagues' funds.
- Endeavor to keep disagreements and controversies impersonal and to promote unity.
- Serve the league as a whole rather than any special interest group or constituency.
- Avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest or partisanship that might compromise the reputation of the league.

#### Board member duties:

- Prepare for and participate in board and committee meetings, including state conventions or state annual meetings.
- Ask timely and substantive questions at board meetings, while supporting the majority decision on issues decided by the board motions.
- Speak for the League (local, state, or national) only when authorized to do so by the local or state league President/Chair.
- Suggest agenda items for board and committee meetings to ensure that significant policy-related matters are addressed.
- Serve on Committees.
- When requested, review publications and written documents for nonpartisanship, balance, League sensitivities, needs of Leagues and/or public, impartiality, or League positions.
- Represent the organizations at meetings, state League Councils/Conventions, field service training, etc.
- Serve as a liaison to assigned local Leagues (see "Guidelines for State/Local League Liaisons" on the LWV Management website).
- Assist with and promote membership growth and diversity and overall visibility of the League.
- Assist with, attend, and promote league activities.
- Become knowledgeable about and Support league positions and practices to include the State Program, the study and consensus process.
- Assist with some aspects of fundraising.

#### President of the Board Duties:

- Leads the League.
- Speaks for the League.
- Organizes and delegates League tasks.
- Convenes and presides over meetings.

#### Organization of the Board:

Leagues operate under a variety of board structures. Many League boards assign specific portfolios or areas of focus (e.g., membership, development, communications, advocacy, voter services, etc.) to their members, while others have established three or four committees organized around priorities identified by the board.

Some Leagues have created the position of president-elect to provide an automatic succession mechanism. Establishing co-presidents or leadership teams is also a way Leagues are organizing themselves to share the duties of the president.

Executive committees, consisting of the president (or co-presidents) and several board members, can assume specific assignments and take action on board matters between regular board meetings, in accordance with powers granted them in the bylaws.

Agendas for upcoming meetings and minutes of previous meetings should be circulated to board members ahead of time, along with written board briefing materials for members to review.

Bylaws may authorize electronic meetings if they are conducted by a technology (such as telephone or video conferencing) that is available to all and allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time. Email is useful for communications between board meetings.



## Membership

### Voting Members

Persons - women and men (since 1974) - at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state Members at Large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues; [4] Those who are students are defined as individuals enrolled either as full or part time with an accredited institution.

### Associate Members.

All others who join the League shall be associate members.

Joining at any level of the organization automatically confers membership at every level, local, state, and national. Membership dues make up a significant portion of the income in most local League budgets. Dues levels are set by each local League, and collecting dues is the responsibility of the local League. Leagues are responsible for paying a per member payment (PMP) for each locally recruited member to the LWVUS and their state League. National PMP is set by delegates at the national convention, and state PMP is set by delegates at the state convention or state annual meeting. .

## Program

The League's Program consists of those governmental issues that the League has chosen for concerted study and action at the national, state or local level. The Program process is specified in the bylaws and includes the following steps:

- Formal adoption (by members at an annual meeting or by state/national convention delegates) of an issue for study.
- Member study and agreement on broad concepts.
- Formulation of a position by the appropriate board of directors.
- Action as directed by the board of directors.
- Annual or biennial re-adoption of the position.

Local Leagues may work simultaneously on local, state, national and (if applicable) regional Program issues, but action may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement. Issues reflect community concerns and range from local park facilities to election reform, from childcare to nuclear waste disposal, from air pollution to international trade, from mental health to energy policy. (The National League's positions on issues can be found in [Impact on Issues](#) on the League Web site.)

## Studies and Program Adoption

The League Program arises from the suggestions of members. At every level of the League, the board of directors is responsible for reviewing and discussing these suggestions, formulating them in appropriate language, and recommending all or some of them for adoption according to procedures specified in the bylaws. A local League's "action" or advocacy Program is determined by members at its annual meeting; state and national Programs are voted upon by delegates at state and national League conventions or Annual meetings. In the course of the Program adoption discussion, members often give suggestions to the board on scope of inquiry, timing, emphasis and ways to handle the study and/or action phases.

### Reaching Member Agreement

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about various aspects of the policy issue. The nature of the issue will affect how it is studied and how positions are reached. The board usually selects the method to be used: consensus (where agreement is reached using League responses to specific questions) or concurrence (where agreement or a vote on a pre-stated position is required).

The technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement is consensus by group discussion. It is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a meeting of the full membership or a series of smaller discussion meetings.

Regardless of the method used, it is essential that members have an opportunity to become informed before being asked to make decisions on the issue under consideration. It is through this process that League members become educated on a given issue, and this is what makes subsequent League action on that issue uniquely credible and respected. During the study phase, members have an opportunity to examine the facts and key pro/con points. They are encouraged to discuss the political realities of action and to contribute ideas for the board to consider when it formulates an action strategy after a position is reached. If the League has a position on a given issue, action can be taken as appropriate. The issue does not need to be studied each time action is thought to be necessary.

### Formulating League Positions

A League's position reflects membership understanding and agreement on a particular public policy issue. In formulating a position, either prior to seeking member agreement through concurrence or following member agreement through consensus, the board must keep in mind the importance of wording the position in terms broad enough to enable the League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of specific legislative and executive proposals over a period of time.

Determining whether consensus has been achieved and how it should be expressed is the responsibility of the board. Through an interpretive process, the board first evaluates the reports of member views and then determines the broad areas of agreement and disagreement that emerge.

Once a League board has finalized a position on an issue, it is announced to members and can be shared with the public. It becomes part of the League's position statements, and the board can begin taking action on it immediately. Like all statements of position, it must be readopted annually or biennially by League members at the annual meeting or biennial convention in order to remain on the Program of issues for possible action.

A local League's views during a regional, state or national study do not constitute a final League position and should not be publicized, either to members or to the public. In this case, each local board's responsibility is to report its members' areas of agreement and its level of member participation to the regional, state or national board. In turn, the appropriate board analyzes the member agreement reports from local Leagues, develops a position statement that reflects member thinking and announces the position to members and the public. That position is then available immediately to be used as the basis for action.

### Key Points of the Study Process

**Local Leagues and Members:** It is important to remember that the study process is a cooperative effort between the local League board and the study committee. It is the board's responsibility to monitor the entire process to ensure that the membership is able to come to consensus in an unbiased and nonpartisan atmosphere.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Glossary of League Terminology**

**ACTION:** Promoting the League's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

**ACTION ALERT:** Request from the LWVUS or state League to take action in support of a League position.

**ANNUAL MEETING:** Local year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes and adopt a budget and Program of work for the next year.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** The elected officers and the elected and appointed directors make up the Board of the League.

**CONSENSUS:** Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue. This technique is most often used in League for reaching member agreement. Neither unanimity nor a simple majority, it is the overall "sense of the group" as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. Consensus is always based upon study and leads to action.

**CONCURRENCE:** Agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members and, when appropriate, a League may concur with the position reached by other League entities without duplicating the complete study and consensus process. Concurrence depends on accepting the validity of the research and analysis process by which other League members or Leagues arrived at a position.

**CONVENTION:** A state or national League meeting held every other year at which delegates elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt Program, make bylaw changes and adopt a budget, usually for one year. Local Leagues send delegates to state convention, local and state Leagues send delegates to national convention. Some states hold state conventions annually (no council meetings being held) and some leagues hold Annual meetings rather than a convention.

**COUNCIL:** An assembly of delegates held in alternate years to adopt a budget and assess Program developments. Local Leagues send delegates to state council (if the state holds council meetings), state Leagues send delegates to national council.

**DIRECTIONS TO BOARD:** Suggestions for prioritizing action, based on league positions, and do not require a vote but shall be noted in the minutes.

**EDUCATION FUND:** The tax-deductible arm of national, state and large local Leagues, handling funds to be used only for educational purposes, not for action on issues.

**GET OUT THE VOTE (GOTV):** Activities to improve voter turnout such as texts, postcards, phone calls.

**ILO:** Acronym for an Inter-League Organization, formed by local Leagues within a county, metropolitan area or region to act on issues that are beyond the local League area in scope.

**LIFE MEMBER:** A person who has been a member for 50 years or more. Life members are excused from dues payment and their Leagues pay no per member payment (PMP) for them.

**MAL:** Acronym for Member At Large, a member who resides outside the area of, and is not enrolled in, a local League.

**MAL UNIT:** A state-recognized group of Members At Large, in an area where there is no local League.

**NONPARTISAN:** Describes the League's political policy of neither supporting nor opposing political parties or candidates

**PMP:** Acronym for Per Member Payment, the amount of money paid to the LWVUS and the state League on behalf of each member.

**OBSERVER CORPS:** a structured way for individuals to exercise their right to know. They help ensure that citizens are aware of the decisions that impact their lives and they promote government transparency and accountability. An observer is an individual who attends a governmental meeting, notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League and through the League to the community.. Ideally, observers are monitoring both the issues being discussed as well as the process by which they are being discussed. Observer programs are not vehicles for individuals to work personal or partisan agendas. Observers generally do not “act” on issues in these meetings unless serving as a designated spokesperson for the League, observers should not provide commentary or testimony on issues on behalf of the League. Instead, observers attend meetings to gather information. Through the process, their presence encourages better, more transparent government.

**PORTFOLIO:** Area of responsibility of each Local League Board member.

**POSITION:** A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

**PRINCIPLES:** Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of Program at all levels.

**PROGRAM:** Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action. It includes adopted positions upon which action is taken and issues for study that will lead to a position and action.

**PROGRAMS:** Plans for speakers, discussion or other activities for League meetings.

**RESOLUTIONS:** Adoption of a resolution requires a majority vote. Must follow national guidelines. Conveys member understanding and agreement

**STUDY ITEM:** Another name for the individual elements of Program when in the study phase. Through the process of study and discussion, members reach consensus regarding the adoption of the study item upon which future League action is based.

**UNIT:** Groupings of members within large local Leagues to provide more opportunity for discussion. Units may be time-oriented (day, evening, lunch hour), geographically oriented, or both.

**VOTER:** Monthly or quarterly newsletters issued by local, state and national Boards.

**VOTERS' GUIDE:** Nonpartisan publication giving candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues.

**VOTER SERVICE:** Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and to encourage their participation in the political process. Registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are basic voter service activities.

**VOTING MEMBERS:** All League members who are U.S. citizens and at least 16 years old.

## Appendix II

### League Resources and LWV.org links

**BASECAMP:** Basecamp is an online collaboration app that lets people manage their work together and communicate with one another. You use it to keep track of all the tasks, deadlines, files, discussions, and announcements that happen around work.

**BOARDSOURCE:** BoardSource, formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards, is an American nonprofit organization founded in 1988. Its mission is "to inspire and support excellence in nonprofit governance and board and staff leadership." The national league has a subscription or membership to this resource for leagues.

**CLEARINGHOUSE:** <https://sites.google.com/a/leagueofwomenvoters.org/clearinghouse/> This site contains studies and research conducted by League members across the country. The purpose of the site is to share League study documents among state and local Leagues and with the public. LWVUS does not maintain the Clearinghouse site, but LWVUS does endorse it as a resource for Leagues. The site is maintained by a group of League member volunteers.

**LWVEF:** League of Women Voters Education Fund - s a 501(c)3 organization ( contributions to it are tax-deductible for the donor). It is through this side of the League that voter information and citizen education activities are carried out at the national level, many through grants from foundations. A number of state Leagues and a few local Leagues also maintain education funds. Many of the educational activities conducted by state and local Leagues are eligible to be funded with tax deductible monies.

**LWVUS WEBSITE:** <https://www.lwv.org/> Selected links from the website are below

- DEI checklist, [https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/dei-checklist\\_module2.pdf](https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/dei-checklist_module2.pdf)
- DEI lens resources: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/dei-resources/dei-lens>
- Federal Action Form: <https://www.lwv.org/federal-action-request-form>
- Guidance for Leagues about Nonpartisanship and Partnerships  
<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/guidance-leagues-about-nonpartisanship-and-partnerships>
- Guidance to LWVUS Services for Leagues: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management>
- **IMPACT ON ISSUES:** A publication on the LWV.org website and available under League Management and available from Amazon.com; this publication is designed to help League members use LWVUS public policy positions effectively at the national, state, and local , and regional levels with the intention to inspire Leagues to use national positions to act in their own communities.:[://www.lwv.org/impact-issues](https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues)
- **LEAGUE BASICS\*** (Formally **In League**): League Basics is a League publication found on the LWV.org website. that contains essential policy and organizational information applicable to every local and state League. League Basics offers advice, guidelines and more detailed information to help leaders develop specific methods of operation to enable a League to accomplish its goals.  
<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/league-basics.pdf>
- **LEAGUE UPDATE**, (formerly Leaders Update): A biweekly LWVUS electronic mailing . It includes information from the National League on Advocacy issues, Membership and League Support, Education

Fund projects and grants and other important items of interest to League leaders. Sign up for it here: [http://participate.lwv.org/signup\\_page/league-update](http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/league-update)

- LWVUS MANAGEMENT: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/manage-your-league>
- LWVUS STAFF: <https://www.lwv.org/about-us/staff>
- OUTREACHCIRCLE: a digital organizing tool being put to use by leagues around the country to build League strength.  
<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/outreachcircle-resources-leagues>
- TOOL KITS AND GUIDES: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/mission-impact-tools>
- Information to facilitate effective programmatic work and drive the League mission, organized by issues area.
- WEBINAR: OPERATING AS A NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION:  
<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/webinar-operating-nonpartisan-organization>

LWVWY WEBSITE: <http://www.wyominglwv.org/> This includes links to the Wyoming local league websites here.

LWVWY FREMONT COUNTY WEBSITE: <https://leagueofwomenvotersfc.org/>

LWVWY PRIVATE WEB LINK: <https://wyominglwv.org/private/> A member only side of the LWVWY website. User ID and Password are needed for access. Contact the LWVWY Tech Team for access ID and Password.

ROSTER SUPPORT PORTAL: This is used to update local and state leagues' membership, officers, and location information in the LWVUS database. The membership information provided through this portal is used for a variety of purposes, including helping prospective members find a league and contact League officers, documenting voting rights at Convention, ensuring League officers get LWVUS e-newsletters, and assessing Per-Member Payment obligations. Local League information displayed on LWV.org comes directly from this Portal.

VOTE411: An online LWV voters' guide. Local Leagues can choose to participate on Vote411.org, for a fee. Leagues can upload information about candidates and issues or candidates can upload their own information to league prepared questions. State Leagues provide information on statewide candidates and issues, and LWVUS provides information on presidential candidates.

\*Updates to League Basics compiled in 2019 by Susan Simpon:

- There's no reference to MyLO, only the California template (League Basics, p.13).
- There's a branding statement now and new logos League Basics,(p. 13)
- " League Updates" are now biweekly with a slight name changer (League Basics, p.25).
- There's no reference to the League Management Site. All references are to [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).