

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DIABLO VALLEY

Membership Manual *Section I: Who We Are* *2014–2015*



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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley

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Office: (925) 283-2235

LWV of Diablo Valley: www.lwvdv.org

LWV of the Bay Area: www.lwvba.org

LWV of California: www.lwvc.org

LWV of the United States: www.lwv.org

Any U.S. citizen, 18 years or older, may join by paying annual dues. The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley does not make membership dependent upon ability to pay. Payments and scholarships may be confidentially arranged. Non-citizens and those under 18 years of age may join as associate members.

SECTION I WHO WE ARE

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OUR MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

PRINCIPLES

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 that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that 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 that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that 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 that 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.

VISION, BELIEFS, AND INTENTIONS

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower people to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

- Acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all governmental levels.
- Builds participation in the democratic process.
- Engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization which:

- Builds participation in the democratic process.
- Studies key community issues at all governmental levels in an unbiased manner.
- Enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

We believe in:

- Respect for individuals.
- The value of diversity.
- The empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities.

We will:

- Act with trust, integrity, and professionalism.
- Operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public.
- Take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership.
- Acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

LEVELS OF THE LEAGUE

Any person, male or female, may become a member of the League. Voting members must be citizens and 18 years of age or older. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level. With that membership comes the opportunity to work on local, state, regional, and national program issues. Local Leagues set their local programs, priorities, and dues; state Leagues set the statewide agenda; national League sets the national agenda.

The **League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley (LWVDV)** membership area includes Alamo, Antioch, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron, Canyon, Clayton, Concord, Danville, Diablo, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Rossmoor, San Ramon, Walnut Creek, and the unincorporated areas of Contra Costa County around and between those cities and towns.

By joining the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley, you are automatically a member of:

- **League of Women Voters of the Bay Area (LWVBA)**, an Inter-League Organization (ILO), a recognized level of LWVUS. The LWVBA is comprised of all the local Leagues in the nine counties that touch San Francisco Bay.
- **League of Women Voters of California (LWVC)**
- **League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS)**

Any person, male or female, may become a member of the League. Voting members must be citizens and 18 years of age or older. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level. With that membership comes the opportunity to work on local, state, regional, and national program issues. Local Leagues set their local programs, priorities, and dues; state Leagues set the statewide agenda; national League sets the national agenda.

HOW WE ESTABLISH A POSITION ON AN ISSUE

The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley (LWVDV) may take action on an issue or advocate for a cause when we have a position that supports the issue or speaks to the cause. Without a position, action/advocacy cannot be undertaken.

Positions result from a process of thorough study. Any given study, whether it is national, state, or local, is thorough in its pursuit of facts and details to examine all sides of an issue. A continuing discussion of pros and cons of each situation occurs, as the study progresses. Study committee members fashion consensus questions that are then addressed by the membership. Group discussions in Unit Meetings, presentations, discussions at General Meetings, questionnaires, and telephone polls may be used as means to reach a League decision about an issue. Regardless of the method used, it is essential that members be informed before making a decision on the issue under discussion.

Two processes are used to form a position. Per the League of Women Voters of California, these are:

- Consensus: the collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.
- Concurrence: agreement by League members with a position on an issue reached by a small group of members or by another League.

If the study was local, the LWVDV Board forms a position based on one of the two preceding processes, which is approved at the LWVDV's Annual Meeting and becomes a "position." Action or advocacy can then be taken on any particular issue within the scope of the position. The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley cannot take positions that are in conflict with existing LWV of the Bay Area, LWV of California, or LWVUS positions. Existing local positions are reaffirmed each year at the League's Annual Meeting.

If the study was statewide or national, the final position is arrived at through a collation of viewpoints from, respectively, all California Leagues or all state Leagues, and either the League of Women Voters of California Board or the LWVUS Board and the delegates to the next convention approve the wording of the position. Existing state and national positions are reaffirmed biennially at the state and national conventions.

The LWVDV often takes action based on a vertical position. A vertical position is a position arrived at through a national, state, or Inter-League Organization study, which has been approved for use at lower levels of the League without prior permission.

HOW WE TAKE ACTION

We often think of League action as “Action Alerts” from the national League or “Calls to Action” from state League, but our League work in the Diablo Valley is also action. For instance, we also take action when we:

- Testify before a local governing body.
- Express League opinions on radio or TV or in the printed press.
- Participate in or hold a town hall meeting on a timely local issue.
- Talk to a friend about League positions.

Our League acts both on current program positions and on principles. How we act—the process used both in making action decisions and in taking action—is what makes the League unique. Action that is based on decisions of informed members and that involves these members is what sets the League apart from other organizations. And the fact that we are members not only of our local League, but also of the League of Women Voters of the Bay Area, the League of Women Voters of California, and the League of Women Voters of the United States makes us a powerful constituency when the League acts in concert.

Since its inception, the League has worked for change, taking action as an essential follow-up to study and consensus on issues. The LWVDV Board of Directors approves action on local issues. Action on Bay Area, California, and national issues is at the request of, or with the consent of, those levels of the League. There are really two types of action:

Official Action is action taken in the name of the League by the President or her/his authorized representatives and approved by the appropriate League Board. It is confined to League positions. When taking official action, the League speaks with one voice, the voice of a substantial majority, as expressed in consensus.

Member Action. The role of the member in action is vital. Each member is urged to stay informed and to take action as an individual in support of League positions. Action may be letters, phone calls, or personal contacts with elected or appointed government officials and their staffs. At times, members will be asked to respond to an official League Call-to-Action, often on specific legislation. Members are also urged to attend public hearings and legislative sessions, especially those at which League testimony is being given, in order to demonstrate support for the League.

BASIS FOR TAKING ACTION

The local League Board may authorize action within its own boundaries and contact local governmental decision makers without consulting other Leagues or state Board if the action is based either on a local position or a vertical position and if no other League shares the jurisdiction being contacted. All other actions require prior approval by the Board at the level the action is to be taken.

Among the questions to be answered before a Board makes a decision to take action are:

- Is there a position on the subject for which action is suggested?
- Are there substantial interest, understanding, and agreement among the members within the jurisdiction where the action will occur?
- Is this the crucial time for the issue?

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- Is this the appropriate level of the League to address the issue?
- Will the League's involvement make a unique impact, or are there other organizations more publicly identified with the issue?

POSITIONS IN CONFLICT

Occasionally there is competition among positions, particularly in connection with growth-management issues; e.g., preservation of open space and the need to increase the housing supply. These conflicts can often be resolved on the basis of:

- What position applies most directly?
- What is member understanding and commitment to both positions?
- Where can the League be most effective?
- Does one position outweigh the other in the importance of this particular issue?

HOW A MEMBER CAN INITIATE ACTION BY THE LEAGUE

All League program assumes that study and consensus are not ends in themselves, but preludes to action. Action enables League members to be effective in two ways:

- They learn how to influence the decision-making processes in their communities and how to help others to do so, thereby promoting citizen responsibility.
- They influence the subject matter of decisions by advocating specific League positions.

Sometimes local action begins through use of League members as observers at meetings of government bodies. The observers follow the general League nonpartisan policy and do not make personal comments or expressions of opinion before, during, or after a meeting. When these government bodies debate issues on which League may have an applicable position, the observer first checks "Program and Positions" to see if League has a position and is able to take action. She/he then contacts the Action Director or Action Committee Chair. If possible, the proposed action will be discussed at an Action Committee meeting. The chain of action is as follows:

OBSERVER/MEMBER WISHING ACTION
contacts
ACTION CHAIR/COMMITTEE
who contacts
PRESIDENT

The same procedure is followed when other members have an issue on which they would like the League to take action. Suppose you see an item in the paper that will affect your locality. Or suppose you think the League should respond to something that has happened at a City Council or Board of Supervisors meeting you have attended. First, check "Program and Positions" at all League levels to see if we have a position on which we can act. Then refer the matter to the Action Committee. The chain of action is the same as above for the observers.

Offer your help in initiating the course of action. Don't leave it up to the Board to follow through. It takes substantial numbers of Leaguers in an area to carry on a program of effective action; it is not just the responsibility of the Board.

REMEMBER: Board approval **must** be obtained before any action is taken. The President **must** sign any letter written *in the name of the League*. The President **must** approve any

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statement made *in the name of the League* before an elected decision-making body; a copy of any such statement should be presented to that elected body, and another copy should be given to the press to help avoid a misquote.

OTHER WAYS TO LOBBY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Telephone calls: Person-to-person calls, especially if you have had a previous contact with a lawmaker, are very valuable. Phone numbers for federal, state, and local elected officials are easily available online, or you may call out office for contact information. Outline what you're going to say before placing the call.

Fax and email: These are especially useful just before a vote. The office (Boardroom) has a fax machine and a computer that may be used for League correspondence (incoming and outgoing).

Personal visits: Make an appointment. Take up to five other people with you; what you don't think to ask, someone else may. Be informed about the issues and your legislator's position on them. In addition to asking him or her questions, let him or her know your views as well, so both sides benefit.

HOW WE PERFORM VOTER SERVICE

The League's Voter Service is widely recognized and trusted for its neutrality. To promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of citizens in government, the League registers voters, puts on public forums on candidates and issues, presents pros and cons of ballot measures, and provides information on voting procedures. Members of the LWV of Diablo Valley:

1. Register thousands of voters over the years by:
 - a. Placing and maintaining dozens of brightly colored boxes filled with registration forms throughout eastern and central Contra Costa County in such frequented locations as post offices, banks, and other places of business.
 - b. Conducting all-day voter registration drives at grocery stores, shopping malls, local high schools and junior colleges, and other locations.
2. Conduct forums so that opposing candidates for political office can present their qualifications and views to the voters. We also present forums where opposing panelists educate citizens about the merits/flaws of ballot measures and other issues of public concern. These candidate and issue forums are often televised, both live and for later telecast, in order to reach as many voters as possible.
3. Distribute—prior to every election—the LWV of California publication “Pros and Cons,” which explains statewide ballot measures.
4. Send two-person teams of speakers to make pros and cons presentations to various churches, businesses, and other groups prior to statewide elections to explain and create interest in state ballot measures.
5. Conduct elections on such issues as incorporation, annexation, town name, etc.
6. Answer frequent phone calls from citizens, especially prior to elections, regarding registration questions, polling locations, absentee ballots, names of candidates, etc.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

What do members do to participate in the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley? There is a large range of opportunities, of long or short duration, some requiring considerable time commitment, some very little time, some which are meeting-intensive, and some that can be done from home. The following are opportunities for you to be involved in our League:

Provide Voter Service

Voter Service incorporates the activities for which we are best known to the public. Every member is encouraged to participate in these activities:

- Offer to help with a candidates' forum, voter registration, or a pros and cons session.
- Work at the polls when the stipend is donated to the LWVDV.
- Tell anyone and everyone about SmartVoter.
- Share your Pros and Cons handout with your friends, family, and co-workers and encourage them to vote.
- Forward action alerts to interested friends and family members.

Increase Membership

- Bring a friend to a meeting.
- Send in the new member form from the *VOTER* with the name of a prospective member so that she/he will receive a copy of the *VOTER* and membership information.
- Tell a friend or co-worker about our website as an opportunity to learn more about the League.
- Ask a friend or acquaintance to join the LWVDV and support our goals.
- Share copies of the *VOTER* or other brochures with friends (copies of the *VOTER* and brochures are available to all members for recruitment purposes).
- Contact the Membership Director, and offer to mentor a new member.

Participate in a Resource (Study) Committee

- Participate in the study group on an issue the League is concerned about.
- Offer to do background research and fact-finding through readings, interviews, surveys, etc. on an issue proposed for study.
- Study an issue in depth and share your knowledge with other members.
- Attend the Unit Meeting on an issue that is being studied.
- Volunteer the use of your home as the site of a Unit Meeting.
- Help present to the membership for discussion, the pros and cons of various alternatives, consideration of the issues, and a search for solutions.
- After the study is completed, stay together with the committee members as an "action" committee and make recommendations to the Board on ways to implement the new position.

Help Choose League Program

- Suggest an idea for study. If the Board likes your suggestion, the idea will be publicized in the *VOTER*. The criteria for selection of program are:
 - The issue must be one on which governmental action is needed.
 - The issue must fall within the Principles of the LWVUS.

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- See Section I, page 4, “How We Establish a Position on an Issue.”
- Participate in the program planning session in the spring.

Take Action

- Write a letter to the editor in support of a League position.
- Go to our website and email your local elected officials regarding a local issue.
- Write or fax your representatives in support of a League position.
- Contact your representatives when you receive an action alert.

Stay Informed

- Attend League meetings.
- Read the *VOTER*.
- Stay informed about local, state, and national news on issues that the League has positions on.
- Subscribe to the newsgroup LWVCnews-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or to League-voice-subscribe@lists.lwv.org in order to stay abreast of important issues.

Be a Board Member

Don't feel like you have to know everything there is to know to be a Board member. Our League has many experienced League members who can help you “learn the ropes.”

Help with Other Opportunities

- Staff the office for a morning or afternoon, as infrequently as once a month.
- Help with a mailing or a phone tree when all the League members need to be contacted.
- Distribute flyers at local libraries, bookstores, and community bulletin boards.
- Proofread the monthly *VOTER* or the annual Membership Manual.

Be a League Observer

Observe at a city council meeting, an agency meeting, or a public forum, and report your observations back to the Board or to the *VOTER* Editor.

Support the League

Make a contribution to the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley or to the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund.

Even if you can't or don't want to volunteer your time, we still greatly appreciate your ongoing membership in the League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley. We are glad you continue to be a member and that you lend your financial support to the important work of the League.

GENERAL INFORMATION

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Membership Requirements

- Belief in the purpose and principles of the League.
- U.S. citizen at least 18 years of age. Associate (nonvoting) membership is available to younger people and noncitizens.
- Payment of annual dues in the anniversary month the member joined the League. (We do not make membership dependent upon ability to pay. Payments and scholarships may be confidentially arranged.)

Geographic Boundaries of the LWV of Diablo Valley

The LWVDV is comprised of cities and unincorporated areas of central and eastern Contra Costa County. Included are: Alamo, Antioch, Bay Point, Bethel Island, Brentwood, Byron, Canyon, Clayton, Concord, Danville, Diablo, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Lafayette, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley, Orinda, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, Rossmoor, San Ramon, and Walnut Creek. There is a separate League in the Richmond/El Cerrito area.

Membership Levels

Upon joining at any level of League, a person becomes a member of the LWV of Diablo Valley, the LWV of the Bay Area, the LWV of California, and the LWV of the United States. Thus, one works with fellow members on issues important to the community, county, region, state, and nation.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LWV OF DIABLO VALLEY

The LWVDV functions under its bylaws and with a Board of Directors consisting of:

- Six officers (President, three Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer)
- Five elected Directors
- As needed, additional Directors elected or appointed by the Board

There are also Item Chairs who are members with interest and expertise in various fields falling under such general categories as natural resources, social policy, and governmental issues. Item Chairs function as resources for specialized information in their fields.

OFFICE—THE BOARDROOM

The League office, called the Boardroom, is located at 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette, CA 94549, and is staffed by League members on a volunteer basis. As scheduling allows, we attempt to be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., except legal holidays, the day after Thanksgiving, and during a two-week winter break preceding January 2 of each year.

The Boardroom maintains a 24-hour message service at (925) 283-2235 for member and public access to League publications and reliable information on elections and current issues.

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Other nonprofit organizations may rent space in the Boardroom as available and use it as a permanent address and phone number, thus making such organizations more accessible to their members, volunteers, and the public. Specific services provided at the office include mail, message, and information distribution; meeting and workspace; filing and storage space for equipment, supplies, and records; and use at election time as a polling place.

Please be aware that the computer in the office is on a wireless network. Do NOT use the office computer to access sites that require a password, access your private financial information, or use your credit card.

MEETINGS

General meetings involve the entire LWVDV membership and are of regional interest. These meetings—often held on the third Thursday—include study and discussion of issues, as well as educational or informational forums. The public is invited to attend.

Annual Meeting is the major business meeting of the year. All members are asked to attend in order to adopt study and action programs for the coming year, elect officers and directors, adopt a budget, and transact any other business.

Area and interest group meetings are held on an as-needed basis, on such items as education, health, land use, or affordable housing. Discussion may be directed toward becoming better informed or toward planning an action campaign based on League positions. Item Chairs can arrange these meetings after Board approval.

Study committee meetings provide the nucleus of information that enables League to act. All interested members research and study a particular topic with the goal of providing objective information in the *VOTER* and/or at area or general meetings so members may reach an informed consensus.

Board of Directors meetings are held to plan and direct program and action, as well as to conduct the business of the League. Any member may attend. In order to be placed on the agenda, a request should be made to the President at least two weeks before the meeting.

Voter Service meetings are open to the public. These include forums at which candidates for political office discuss their qualifications and where they stand on the issues. A Voter Service meeting may also be an issue forum at which proponents and opponents of a ballot measure discuss its provisions. League's nonpartisan posture is preserved at these meetings.

Citizen information connotes League activities undertaken to help members and the public to better use government services and to understand and participate in government and politics at all levels. As part of its citizen information activities, the League occasionally sponsors seminars on government operations, the political process, and community problems.

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PUBLICATIONS

Newsletters: Members receive four *VOTERs*: national, state, Bay Area, and local. The Diablo Valley *VOTER* is published 10 times per year. It notifies members of upcoming events; presents background notes for study programs; reports meetings, consensus, calls to action, and action taken; and discusses many other League-related subjects of interest. Members are urged to write reports and submit them to the *VOTER* editor by the fifteenth of each month for publication in the following month's issue.

Other publications: Excellent publications relating to program, action, Voter Service, League organization, and governmental issues are produced at all levels of League. Members, teachers, libraries, and individuals, as well as government staff use these and assure us of their factual usefulness and impartial tone. Many of these publications are available in the League office, and others may be ordered. Some of these publications may be checked out; others are either free to members or priced reasonably. Check the appropriate website for availability and prices:

- LWVUS Publications Service: New publications of general interest.
- *Bay Area Monitor*: Significant action and decisions by agencies affecting transportation and air quality in the Bay Area. Published by the Bay Area League.
- *Decision Makers*: A directory of regional and inter-county Bay Area agencies.

OTHER INFORMATION SOURCES

Speakers Bureau: This service is provided to organizations requesting League speakers or panelists on study topics and action programs. During election periods, speakers are available to discuss the pros and cons of ballot measures. Contact the Speakers Bureau Chair for more information

League Action Line: For latest developments on national League issues, call the League office (202-429-1965) during office hours, Eastern Time, and ask for the League Action Line. After hours, listen for instructions, press Z.

[Smart Voter](http://www.smartvoter.org/) <www.smartvoter.org/>

The pride of the League, this site contains everything you would want to know about voting, including your polling place, your personal ballot, nonpartisan election information, and candidates' personal statements. Tell all your family and friends about this terrific resource.

[LWVDV Yahoo Group](mailto:LWV-DV@yahoogroups.com) <[LWV-DV@yahoogroups.com/](mailto:LWV-DV@yahoogroups.com)>

[League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley](http://www.lwvdv.org/) <www.lwvdv.org/>

Refer potential members to our website to learn about our League.

[LWV of Bay Area Inter-League Organization](http://www.lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org/) <www.lwvba.ca.lwvnet.org/>

Serving the people of the nine Bay Area counties.

[League of Women Voters of California](http://www.ca.lwv.org/) <www.ca.lwv.org/>

The state website is well organized and has links to the latest state Action and Education topics.

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LWVC Members Only

This site does not require a user id or password. Contact a Board member for the website address, and please do not share or publicize this site link with nonmembers. There are links to information about the state League and to the latest studies. Under “**Tool Box**” you can sign up for state email lists and action groups.

[League of Women Voters of the United States](http://www.lwv.org/) <www.lwv.org/>

The national League website provides links to current LWV news and issues. Assist the League on important issues by clicking on “**TAKE ACTION**” in the blue menu towards the top. Sign up for the **Grassroots Lobby Corps** to have action alerts emailed to you when legislative action is needed at the federal level.

[LWV Members Only](http://member.lwv.org/) <member.lwv.org/>

If you have not done so, go to the LWVUS registration page <member.lwv.org/PreRegister.asp> and select a password. Your user id is your email address, and you must have cookies enabled. Contact the Membership Director if you cannot log in, as your email address on the database could be wrong. Once you are logged in, select “**FOR MEMBERS**” from the blue menu towards the top. Menu items of special interest include:

- “**Leaders’ Section**” contains contact information for the national League and special sections for officers, directors, and chairs of individual Leagues.
- “**Essential League Resources**” with links to “**League Basics**” (“**In League**”) and “**League Lingo**.” *League Basics* is the 139-page booklet that is sometimes referred to as the “League Bible.” It has comprehensive information about the fundamental practices and process for running the League.
- “**Recent News and Updates**,” to keep you informed about issues at the national League level.
- “**Stay Involved**,” with links to join national League email lists and action groups.

LEAGUE DEFINITIONS

Action: Steps taken to influence public policy consistent with League positions. Techniques used to achieve League goals include lobbying, legislative testimony, monitoring of public meetings, public statements, media campaigns, public forums, coalitions, and litigation.

Annual Meeting: Local business meeting, usually in May, to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaw changes, and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

Associate member: A non-voting member of the League, such as a person under 18 years of age or a non-citizen.

Call to Action/Action Alert: A carefully timed request from a national, state, or local League Board asking members to take action on behalf of a League position. A request for legislative action is known as a call to action by LWVC and an action alert by LWVUS.

Coalition: An action coalition is usually a temporary alliance (for the duration of a campaign) that brings together organizations for joint action toward a limited and well-defined goal. A coalition has a formal structure and established guidelines; member organizations are committed to action in the name of the coalition.

Concurrence: Concurrence is the act of agreeing with—or concurring with—a statement of position. A decision-making technique used by the League for some time, concurrence can work several ways. Groups of League members or League Boards can concur with:

- Recommendations of a resource committee or a unit group;
- Decision statements formulated by League Boards; or,
- Positions reached by another League or Leagues.

Consensus: Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole, after objective study of an issue.

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.

Council: An assembly of delegates held in alternate years to adopt a budget and assess program developments. Local Leagues send delegates to state council; state Leagues send delegates to national council.

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.

Honorary 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.

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.

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

Nonpartisanship: The policy (as stated in the bylaws) that the League as an organization does not support or oppose any candidate for office or any political party. League members, however, are encouraged to work as individuals for the political party or candidate of their choice. Each League Board adopts its own nonpartisan policy, which interprets for its members

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and the community any restrictions it places on the political activities of its Board members.

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

Position Review: Participation by members, as a preparation for convention or annual meeting, in an evaluation of the League's current capacity to influence public policy. League positions at each level are reviewed for clarity, relevance, and effectiveness. Review may result in proposals to the appropriate Board to clarify or drop a position. Changing the substance of any position requires a new or update study or concurrence process with a Board-recommended change accompanied by background material. Local League members may ask the appropriate Board to undertake such a study or concurrence process if a position appears outdated or inconsistent with other positions.

Position Summary: The official statement of League positions within each program area; e.g., Government, Natural Resources, Social Policy, etc. The position summary is originally adopted and must be readopted thereafter at each convention or annual meeting.

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.

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

Scope: A definition of the limits of a study and possible areas of exploration. The scope is developed by the study committee and approved by the appropriate Board.

Study: The process of gathering information for discussion by members with a view of reaching consensus and establishing positions on a subject adopted by convention or annual meeting. Studies are conducted at all levels of League.

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.

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 are at least 18 years old.

Vertical Position: National, state, or Inter-League Organization positions are designated as vertical if they may be used as the basis for action at lower League levels without prior permission.