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January 2012 Special Mailing  
**PASS TO VOTER SERVICE CHAIR**  
**IMMEDIATELY**

TO: Local League Presidents and Voter Service Chairs  
**PLEASE PASS TO VOTER SERVICE CHAIR IMMEDIATELY**

FROM: League of Women Voters of Ohio Education Fund (LWVOEF)  
RE: **2012 Primary Election Voters' Guide Information Packet**

This packet contains candidate questions and assignments for local Leagues in preparation for the **March 6, 2012, Primary Election.**

Some local Leagues may not be planning to have voter service activities for the Primary Election.

**Even so, it is important that you confer with all Leagues with whom you share candidates to see what they are planning and to check assigned districts for accuracy. Please confer with other Leagues as soon as possible.**

**Please let us know if your League needed to change / correct its assignment(s) based on the new districts. Thank you!**

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## What's New?

- **We can get you this information in other formats:**

If you need information via fax or by email, contact Michele Martin at the LWVOEF office at 614/469-1505, toll-free at 1-877-LWV-OHIO or by e-mail at [lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org](mailto:lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org)

- **Redistricting:**

With all U.S. Congressional districts and Ohio House and Senate districts changed, the state League has done our best to identify which Leagues go with which districts. However, some are “best guesses” and may be inaccurate. **Please let Michele Martin in the state office know immediately if your League is improperly assigned a district (see contact information above), and please let other Leagues in that district know.**

- **Look for updated information about statewide candidates for the General Election:**

We will allow candidates to review and update their Primary Election answers for the General Election if the same questions are used, although we may also ask a different, more topical question. The filing deadline for the 2012 General Election is August 8, 2012 (90 days out from Election Day), so the revised questionnaire will go to winners of the Primary Election plus any third-party candidates as soon as the names have been validated (Aug. 27: deadline for write-in candidates to file). **You should expect this updated candidate information by mid-September.**

## Shared Candidate Instructions

1. We have done our best to match Leagues with appropriate redrawn Ohio General Assembly and Congressional districts – but anticipate some assignments may need to be revised. **Please look at all lists starting on page 9 in order to determine if the districts for your League are correct – and which are your League's responsibility.** The underlined League shall report for other Leagues in the same district. **If your League has been assigned to collect information, but you're not planning to produce a voters' guide, please let the other Leagues know immediately so other arrangements can be made. If the assigned district(s) is not correct, also please immediately let the other Leagues know.** In both cases, we ask that you notify Michele Martin, LWV Ohio Office Manager at [lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org](mailto:lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org), 614-469-1505 or toll free at 877-598-6446.
2. Contact all Leagues in your district. Find out:
  - A. Publishing deadline for their Voters' Guide.
  - B. If / how costs of postage, copying, paper, etc. can be shared.
  - C. To whom the information should be mailed.
3. Get a complete and accurate list of all candidates for your district from your Board of Elections, or from the Board of Elections in the most populous county if there is more than one county in the district (as may be the case for regional offices such as U.S. House, state Senate, etc.).
4. A sample letter to send individual candidates is included. Listing all the Leagues using the candidate's information will broaden your base of appeal. (See Appendix A.)
5. A sample questionnaire is also included. (See Appendix B.)

## Candidate Questions: Statewide Candidates

LWVOEF has responsibility for collecting responses in races for statewide offices. Statewide offices for this primary election are U.S. Senator and Ohio Supreme Court Justices. The statewide candidates this year will be asked the following questions for the Primary Election Voters' Guide.

### U.S. SENATOR

#### Questions:

- 1) According to the U.S. Census, median income has declined and the number in poverty has increased. What steps should be taken to strengthen the U.S. economy and address unemployment?
- 2) How would you reform the tax code?
- 3) How would you change Medicare to make it sustainable?
- 4) Do you believe it is possible to protect the environment while preserving American jobs. What are examples of how this can be done?

### SUPREME COURT JUSTICE:

The Supreme Court is the court of last resort in Ohio. The Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction in cases involving questions arising under the Ohio or United States Constitutions, cases originating in the courts of appeals, and cases in which there have been conflicting opinions on the same question from two or more courts of appeals. The Supreme Court hears all cases in which the death penalty has been imposed.

Finally, the Supreme Court's appellate jurisdiction extends to review the actions of certain administrative agencies, including the Public Utilities Commission and the Board of Tax Appeals.

A person must be an attorney with at least six years experience in the practice of law to be elected or appointed to the Supreme Court.

#### Questions

- 1) There is a public perception that campaign spending influences judicial decisions. What steps should be taken to give Ohioans confidence that justice is impartial and not influenced by campaign spending?
- 2) Ohio has recusal standards requiring judges not to participate in cases where they have an interest. What are specific examples of situations where you think a judge should recuse himself or herself?

*The LWVO office has sent these questions and a request for biographical information to candidates in contested statewide primary races (U.S. Senator and Ohio Supreme Court Justices), and will **share the responses Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>** for incorporation into local voters' guides.*

## Candidate Questions: Regional/County/Party Offices - Primary Election

LOCAL LEAGUES WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:

Please refer to the enclosed sheets on pages 9-12 to determine which League is responsible for contacting the candidate.

### **OHIO COURT OF APPEALS:**

The 12 district courts of appeals in Ohio are intermediate level appellate courts whose primary function is to hear appeals from the common pleas, municipal and county courts. Each case is heard and decided by a three-judge panel. The number of judges in each district depends on a variety of factors, including the court's caseload and the size of the district. The number of judges in each district varies from four to twelve.

In addition to their appellate jurisdiction, the courts of appeals have original jurisdiction, as does the Supreme Court, to hear applications for writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, procedendo, prohibition and quo warranto. The Tenth District Court of Appeals in Franklin County also hears appeals from the Ohio Court of Claims.

#### **Suggested Questions**

- 1) There is a public perception that campaign spending influences judicial decisions. What steps should be taken to give Ohioans confidence that justice is impartial and not influenced by campaign spending?
- 2) Ohio has recusal standards requiring judges not to participate in cases where they have an interest. What are specific examples of situations where you think a judge should recuse himself or herself?

### **U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

#### **Suggested Questions**

- 1) According to the U.S. Census, median income has declined and the number in poverty has increased. What steps should be taken to strengthen the U.S. economy and address unemployment?
- 2) How would you reform the tax code?
- 3) How would you change Medicare to make it sustainable?
- 4) Do you believe it is possible to protect the environment while preserving American jobs? What are examples of how this can be done?

## OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES and OHIO SENATE:

### Suggested Questions

- 1) Do you think that the existing system of redistricting needs reform and, if so, how would you reform it?
- 2) What would you do to improve the job situation in Ohio?
- 3) What would you do, if anything, to work cooperatively with members of the other party to seek compromise?
- 4) There is a growing perception that campaign spending unduly influences political decisions. What steps can be taken to address this?

### Additional Information about Primary Elections

- Independent candidates will not appear on a primary ballot.
- Candidates for judge are identified according to party in the Primary Election only. For the purpose of clarity for those voting in a primary, voters' guides need to designate which names for judge will appear on the Democratic and Republican ballots. For the General Election, all judicial candidates run on a nonpartisan ballot. **Be sure that no party designation appears for the General Election.**
- A key area of confusion about primaries is political party affiliation: In Ohio, a person joins a political party or changes political parties only at a **Primary Election**. When voters declare a party preference at a Primary Election in Ohio, they are considered members of that political party.

To change party affiliation, the person, while signing in to vote at the Primary Election, simply declares that s/he wishes to change party affiliation. The person may be asked to sign a statement that they wish to be affiliated with, and support the principles of, the party whose primary ballot is requested.

If you register to vote as a Republican, for example, **in the Primary Election**, your vote will help choose the Republican Party's nominees for various offices. Since you, as a Republican, are selecting your party's candidate to run against candidates from other parties in the General Election, you will be given only Republican names to choose from in the primary. You will not see the names of any Democrats or Independents on your Primary Election ballot.

You do not have to register as a member of a political party. If you are not a member of the Democrat or Republican Party, you will only vote for candidates running on a nonpartisan ballot in the Primary Election.

A voter's statement of party preference is in no way binding in the General Election, when voters choose whichever candidate they consider most qualified.

If there are local issues on the ballot, voters may vote on them regardless of whether they vote on any candidates.

## Duties, Terms, and 2012 Salaries: Statewide Offices

<u>Office</u>	<u>No. to be elected</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>U.S. Senator</b>	1	\$174,000	6 yrs

Responsibilities: Represents the people of Ohio and the U.S. in dealing with matters of national and international importance. The general welfare should be a prime concern.

<b>Justice, Ohio Supreme Court</b>	3	\$141,600	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: Hears all cases involving questions arising under the Ohio Constitution or statutes; hears appeals from Courts of Appeals decisions. The Supreme Court's decisions are final except in cases involving the U.S Constitution, statutes, or treaties.

## Duties, Terms, and 2012 Salaries: Regional/County/Party Offices

<u>Office</u>	<u>No. to be elected</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>U.S. Representative</b>	16 (1 from each dist)	\$174,000	2 yrs

Responsibilities: To represent the people of Ohio, their district, and the United States in dealing with matters of national and international importance. The general welfare should be a prime concern.

<b>Ohio Senator</b>	17 (1 from each even-numbered dist+1 unexpired term)	\$60,584	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To represent the people of the district and the state of Ohio in dealing with matters not allocated to the federal government.

<b>Ohio Representative</b>	99 (1 from each dist)	\$60,584	2 yrs
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Responsibilities: To represent the people of the district and the State of Ohio in dealing with matters not allocated to the federal government.

<b>Judge, Ohio Court of Appeals</b>	1 from each of 12 districts (contact Board of Elections)	\$132,000	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: The Court of Appeals is essentially a Court of Review. It hears appeals from the Common Pleas, County, and Municipal Courts.

Decisions are final except in cases involving Constitutional questions, cases of felony, cases in which it has original jurisdiction, and cases of public or great general interest.

**COUNTY OFFICES-Local Leagues should check salary & term information with their county Board of Election.**

<u>Office</u>	<u>No. to be elected</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>County Commissioner</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs

Responsibilities: To exercise financial control of County expenditures; to authorize public works; to purchase land and buildings; to let contracts; to plan and administer welfare. The Board of County Commissioners also appoints other officials to operate various departments.

<b>County Coroner</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To determine the cause of death of persons dying in a violent or suspicious manner and to issue death certificates.

<b>County Engineer</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To oversee the construction, maintenance, and repair of all bridges in the county, and of county roads and other public improvements except buildings in the county.

<b>County Prosecutor</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To investigate and prosecute crimes committed within the county, to defend the county in court, and to give legal advice to county agencies and townships.

<b>County Recorder</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To record deeds, mortgages, plats, liens, and other written instruments.

<b>County Sheriff</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To provide services to the courts, to oversee the county jail, and to act as chief law enforcement officer for the county.

<b>County Treasurer</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To collect taxes in the county and its subdivisions, disburse expenditures, and invest the county's funds.

<b>County Clerk of Courts</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To enter judgments and collect court costs for appellate and common pleas courts, and also to issue and transfer automobile and water craft certificates of title.

<b>Judge, Common Pleas Court*</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	\$121,350	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: To preside at trials of both civil and criminal cases; to supervise the jury commission, grand jury, and other departments of the court.

<b>Judge, Probate Court</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	\$121,350	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: To rule on cases involving disposition of wills, the administration of estates and guardianships, adoptions, questions of mental or physical disability. They are also responsible for issuing marriage licenses.

<b>Judge, Court of Domestic Relations</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	\$121,350	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: To handle cases of divorce, dissolution of marriage, annulment, separation, and child custody matters.

<b>Judge, Juvenile Court</b>	Check with your Board of Elections	\$121,350	6 yrs
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Responsibilities: To rule in cases involving persons under 18 years of age. The Juvenile Court has authority in cases of delinquency, unruliness, juvenile traffic offenses, abuse, neglect, and dependency. The Juvenile Court may be part of the Court of Domestic Relations or the Probate Court.

<b>County Court Judge</b> (or Municipal Court Judge with countywide jurisdiction)	Check with your Board of Elections	Based on population	6 yrs
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Check with your Board of Elections for local jurisdictions and responsibilities.

\* Note: Not all common pleas courts are subdivided into divisions (General, Probate, Domestic Relations, and Juvenile). These descriptions are provided for those Leagues in counties that do make the distinctions. Check with your Board of Elections.

**POLITICAL PARTY OFFICES:**

The State Central Committee for political parties is elected by state senate districts, but candidates do not need to reside in the district from which they desire to be elected. The correct state senate district number must be on petitions and filings must be made in the most populous county in the district.

<u>Office</u>	<u>No. to be elected</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Term</u>
<b>Member, State Central Committee</b>	1 man and 1 woman from each state senate dist	No salary	4 yrs

Responsibilities To coordinate party affairs throughout the state; to arrange for the state convention; to formulate party platform; to determine what candidates shall have party support. The State Central Committee sees to the general welfare and administration of the party and raises its funds.

<b>Member, County Central Committee</b>	one from each party from each precinct or ward and township	No salary	4 yrs
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Responsibilities: To direct party activities within the county; to present a slate of candidates; to work to strengthen the party by enlisting active party workers at the precinct level.

## County Offices: Local Leagues Sharing a County

The underlined League is requested to initiate the cooperation between Leagues within a county to collect information on the county offices, which will include common pleas judges in some counties.

<u>County</u>	<u>Cooperating Leagues</u>
Butler	Cincinnati Area, <u>Oxford</u>
Cuyahoga	Cleveland Area, Shaker Heights, <u>Cuyahoga Area</u>
Portage	Northern Portage County, <u>Kent</u>
Stark	<u>Canton Area</u>
Summit	<u>Akron Area</u> , Hudson, Tallmadge
Wood	Bowling Green, <u>Perrysburg Area</u>

It is up to the discretion of the cooperating Leagues how they wish to divide the county offices. You may wish to divide the offices according to where candidates live, or it may be best for the League with the largest group of active members to do all the county offices.

## Assignments for Securing Information on Candidates for the United States House of Representatives

<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>
1	<u>Cincinnati Area</u>
2	<u>Chillicothe/Ross Co</u> , Cincinnati Area, Clermont Co, Portsmouth/Scioto Co
3	<u>Metro Columbus</u>
4	Lima Area, <u>Marion</u> , Oberlin Area, Tiffin Area
5	<u>Bowling Green</u> , Perrysburg Area, Toledo/Lucas Co
6	Greater Youngstown, <u>Marietta/Washington Co</u> , Portsmouth/Scioto Co
7	Canton Area, <u>Oberlin Area</u>
8	<u>Darke Co</u> , Oxford
9	Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area, Shaker Hgts, <u>Toledo/Lucas Co</u>
10	<u>Greater Dayton Area</u>
11	Akron Area, Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area, <u>Shaker Hgts</u> ,
12	<u>Delaware Co</u> , Metro Columbus
13	Akron Area, Greater Youngstown, <u>Kent</u> , N. Portage Co, Trumbull Co
14	Akron Area, Ashtabula Co, Geauga Co, Hudson, Lake Co, <u>Kent</u> , N. Portage Co, Tallmadge, Trumbull Co
15	<u>Athens</u> Co, Chillicothe/Ross Co, Metro Columbus
16	Canton Area, Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area, <u>Kent</u> , Shaker Hgts, Wayne Co

## Assignments for Securing Information on Candidates for the Ohio House of Representatives

<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>
1	<u>Wayne Co</u>	65-66	<u>Clermont Co</u>
2	No League	67-68	<u>Delaware Co</u>
3	<u>Bowling Green, Perrysburg Area</u>	69	No League
4	<u>Lima Area</u>	70	No League
5	No League	71	No League
6-16	Cleveland Area, Shaker Heights, <u>Cuyahoga Area</u>	72	No League
17-18	<u>Metro Columbus</u>	73	No League
19	<u>Delaware Co, Metro Columbus</u>	74	No League
20-26	<u>Metro Columbus</u>	75	<u>Kent</u>
27-33	<u>Cincinnati Area</u>	76	Geauga Co, <u>N. Portage Co</u>
34-35	<u>Akron Area</u>	77	No League
36	<u>Tallmadge</u>	78	<u>Athens Co</u>
37	<u>Hudson</u>	79	No League
38	No League	80	<u>Darke Co</u>
39-43	<u>Greater Dayton</u>	81	No League
44-47	<u>Toledo/Lucas Co</u>	82	No League
48-49	<u>Canton Area</u>	83	No League
50	No League	84	<u>Darke Co</u>
51	No League	85	No League
52	No League	86	<u>Marion</u>
53	<u>Oxford</u>	87	No League
54	No League	88	<u>Tiffin Area</u>
55	No League	89	No League
56	<u>Oberlin Area</u>	90	<u>Portsmouth/Scioto Co</u>
57	No League	91-92	<u>Chillicothe/Ross Co</u>
58-59	<u>Greater Youngstown</u>	93	No League
60-61	<u>Lake Co</u>	94	Athens Co, <u>Marietta/Washington Co</u>
62	No League	95	<u>Marietta/Washington Co</u>
63	<u>Trumbull Co</u>	96	No League
64	Trumbull Co, <u>Ashtabula Co</u>	97	No League
		98	No League
		99	Ashtabula Co, <u>Geauga Co</u>

**Assignments for Securing Information on  
Candidates for the Ohio Senate-terms end in 2012, 2016, 2020**

<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>
1-	No League		
2-	Bowling Green, <u>Perrysburg Area</u>		
4-	<u>Oxford</u>	20-	<u>Athens Co</u>
6-	<u>Greater Dayton Area</u>	22-	No League
8-	<u>Cincinnati Area</u>		
10-	No League	24-	<u>Cleveland Area</u> , Cuyahoga Area,
12-	Darke County, <u>Lima Area</u>	26-	Marion, <u>Tiffin Area</u>
14-	Clermont Co, <u>Portsmouth/Scioto Co</u>	28-	Tallmadge, <u>Akron Area</u>
16-	<u>Metro Columbus</u>	30-	Athens Co, <u>Marietta/Washington Co</u>
18-	<u>Kent</u> , N. Portage Co, Geauga Co, Lake Co	32-	<u>Ashtabula Co</u> , Trumbull Co, Gauga Co

**Assignments for Securing Information on Candidates for  
Ohio Court of Appeals**

<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Underlined League is Responsible</u>
1	<u>Cincinnati Area</u>	8	<u>Cleveland Area</u> , Shaker Heights, Cuyahoga Area,
2	Darke Co., <u>Greater Dayton Area</u>	9	Akron Area, <u>Hudson</u> , Tallmadge, Wayne Co.
3	Lima Area, <u>Marion</u> , Tiffin Area	10	<u>Metro Columbus</u>
4	<u>Athens Co.</u> , Chillicothe/Ross Co., Marietta/Washington Co., Portsmouth/Scioto Co.	11	Ashtabula Co., Geauga Co., <u>Kent</u> , Lake Co., N. Portage Co., Trumbull Co.
5	Canton Area, <u>Delaware Co.</u>	12	Clermont Co., <u>Cincinnati Area</u> , Oxford
6	<u>Bowling Green</u> , Toledo/Lucas Co, Perrysburg Area		
7	<u>Greater Youngstown</u>		

## **Assignments for Securing Information on Candidates for State Board of Education (Applicable only for the General Election)**

<b>District</b>	<b><u>Underlined League is Responsible</u></b>
1	Darke Co., Lima Area, <u>Tiffin</u> , Marion
2	<u>Bowling Green</u> , Perrysburg Area, Toledo/Lucas Cty
3	Greater Dayton, <u>Oxford</u> , Darke
4	<u>Cincinnati Area</u>
5	Ashtabula Cty, Lake Cty, <u>Wayne Cty</u> , Cuyahoga Area
6	Metro Columbus
7	Akron Area, Geauga Cty, Hudson, Kent, N. Portage Cty, <u>Tallmadge</u> , Trumbull Cty
8	<u>Canton Area</u> , Greater Youngstown
9	Delaware Cty, <u>Athens Cty</u> , Marietta/Washington Cty
10	Chillicothe/Ross Cty, Portsmouth/Scioto Cty, <u>Clermont Cty</u>
11	Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area, <u>Shaker Hts</u>
At-Large	<u>State League</u>

## **Candidate Questionnaires and Word Limits**

### **Questionnaires to Candidates**

Secure the complete and certified list of candidates (don't forget the independent candidates in the General Election) from your county Board of Elections. Be aware that the time between securing the official list and the deadline for printing is very short. It is ideal to have the candidates' letters ready, except for typing in the names and addresses, so that little time is lost sending the letters. In the event that a candidate's certification is in doubt, it is usually best to send the letter, explaining that if the candidate is certified the information will appear in the voters' guide.

A sample letter (see Appendix A) and a sample questionnaire (see Appendix B) are included here for your guidance. As a safeguard to your League, restrictions on editing and changing copy should be clearly stated both on the questionnaire and in the cover letter.

It is highly advisable that local Leagues add a disclaimer on their candidate and survey form that inclusion in a League's voters' guide is not an endorsement, and the candidate may not imply at anytime that inclusion in your League's is an endorsement.

It is important to ensure that each candidate has received a questionnaire. This can be achieved by delivering in person, sending by certified mail with "return receipt" requested (highly recommended when possible) or by email with "return receipt." In each case, your League should keep a written record of the delivery and any communication with the candidate and her/his campaign. If regular mail or email is used, a follow-up phone call is imperative if the completed questionnaire has not been returned. If the candidate has not returned a completed questionnaire, it is advisable to send a second questionnaire by registered mail with return receipt requested.

## Questionnaire Word Limit

Formulate candidates' questions with utmost care. Set a word limit for each section of the questionnaire and each question, or for the total questionnaire. Stick to the limit set. Be sure you explain, in the letter or questionnaire or both, just what you will consider a word. For instance: The following are counted as one word: 1989, L.L.D., the, and, a, for. Do not use abbreviations except for degrees. "OU" would be two words for "Ohio University."

If a candidate does not comply with the word limit set by your League, return the questionnaire to the candidate with a request that the questionnaire be edited to conform to the word limit, or confer with the candidate by phone and then send the revised copy for signature.

It is incumbent that the letter to the candidate and the questionnaire's instruction make it clear that answers will be cut off at the word limit, in case publication deadlines are too tight to allow for changes in the questionnaires.

The only way to ensure complete fairness and objectivity is to equally enforce strict rules. It is incumbent that the letter to the candidate and the questionnaire's instruction make it clear that answers will be cut off at the word limit, in case publication deadlines are too tight to allow for changes in the questionnaires.

The only way to ensure complete fairness and objectivity is to equally enforce strict rules.

### When framing questions on issues:

- Choose issues of major interest in your community, not limited to League program.
- If an issue covers a League position, don't let it show.
- Do not allow a question to seem to favor any candidate.
- Word questions simply.
- Restrict issues to those solvable at that office's level of government.
- Explain technical language briefly and simply, e.g., "home rule."
- Consider the word limit when framing the question.
- Consider asking two questions: a general one to each candidate to spot his/her interests, and a specific one on topical issue.
- Questions for judges should not violate standard judicial ethical canons.

## Asking Judges Questions

Many good questions can be framed for judicial candidates, but there are certain precautions that should be taken. According to Rule 4.1(A)(7) of the Ohio Code of Judicial Conduct, judges shall not, in connection with cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court, make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office.

They can be asked their views on court congestion, reorganization, or any matter affecting the administration of justice. Of course, when preparing for the publication of a voters' guide, all questions submitted to candidates must be approved by the local League's Board of Directors.

For a list of possible questions for judicial candidates, please see LWVOEF's "Sample Questions for Judicial Candidates" at

[http://www.lwvohio.org/assets/attachments/file/Sample\\_Questions\\_for\\_Judicial\\_Candidates.pdf](http://www.lwvohio.org/assets/attachments/file/Sample_Questions_for_Judicial_Candidates.pdf)

## LWV: Political but Nonpartisan

- Available at <http://www.lwv.org/content/political-yet-nonpartisan>

November 04, 2011 | by S. Peterson

Soon after the League's founding, the decision was made to take positions on issues but to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate (appointed or elected) for public office. Today, this policy continues to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics.

To ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization, each League's board of directors is responsible for drafting and carrying out its own nonpartisan policy and for seeing that both its members and the public understand the League's nonpartisan role.

Leagues should also have a conflict of interest policy related to board members' paid employment, service on other boards (including League boards at other levels), personal lobbying, etc.

Information about developing and implementing a nonpartisan policy, the nonpartisan policy of the national League board and sample policies for local and state Leagues can be found in the Members section of the League Web site (<http://www.lwv.org/member-resources>).

## LWVUS: Voters' Guides Best Practices

- February 21, 2008 | by LWV at <http://www.lwv.org/content/voters%E2%80%99-guides-best-practices>

### Voters' Guides Best Practices: Table of Contents

#### A. Introduction

#### B. General

#### C. Funding Your Voters' Guide

#### D. Partnering With Media Outlets

#### A. Introduction

Over the years, Leagues have built up high recognition value and reservoirs of community trust by providing citizens accurate, nonpartisan services and information on elections and on governmental issues. Public respect for the League's commitment to factual, unbiased information is a source of pride for League members and one that can be drawn on repeatedly in seeking community support for League activities and recruiting new members.

Producing candidates' questionnaires or Voters' Guides requires especially careful attention and sound judgment by the entire board, in order to protect the League's nonpartisan reputation and the public's trust.

In providing voter information, Leagues often work with other organizations, including newspapers and other media that may endorse candidates or have political action committees (PACs). In deciding how to work with such organizations, Leagues need to consider carefully how their participation might affect their nonpartisan status or the public's perception of the League's nonpartisanship. They must make sure that the ground rules are set to ensure that the activity is conducted in a strictly nonpartisan manner. It is important to *make clear that the League cannot waive its nonpartisan policy or any procedures that ensure fair treatment of candidates*. The same is true when a League cooperates with a newspaper or other media outlet to produce or distribute election information.

The following are recommended practices:

## B. General

1. *Fair, balanced and nonpartisan questions* for candidates should be the responsibility of each League. A League may wish to solicit input from a partner (organization or media outlet), but the final choice and wording of questions should be the League's.
2. *Prominent display of the League logo*, contact information for the League and Web address should be standard practice and explained early on as part of the partnership. This benefits both the League and the partnership effort, as the public puts the highest level of trust in the League, and will see our logo as a trusted "seal of approval."
3. League positions on Ballot Measures or Constitutional Amendments, etc, *should not be included* in Voters' Guides. Leagues can distribute additional supplemental facts sheets (or publications, etc) that cover this information, but the fact sheets should: neither be part of the Voters' Guide nor distributed such that it appears as though it is a supplement of the Voters' Guide; and the fact sheets should have a different look and feel (e.g. design) so that the League's voter service activities and its advocacy activities are not easily confused. Leagues may choose to do pros and cons on Ballot Measures or Constitutional Amendments. However, League positions on either *should not be included* in Voters Guides.
4. League positions on issues (e.g. environmental or taxation, etc) also *should not be included* in Voters' Guides. Again, Leagues can distribute additional supplemental facts sheets (or publications, etc) that cover this information but the fact sheets should: neither be part of the Voters' Guide nor distributed such that it appears as though it is a supplement of the Voters' Guide; and the fact sheets should have a different look and feel (e.g. design) so that the League's voter service activities and its advocacy activities are not easily confused.
5. Include a *League membership "ad"* in your Voters' Guide, as long as general League funds (e.g. non tax-deductible funds) cover the specific cost of including the "ad." For example, if a Voters' Guide is 5 pages and the membership "ad" is half a page; general League funds should cover 10% of the total cost of printing and distributing the Voters' Guide. Some sample language for your ad includes: "*The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. We are trusted, nonpartisan and never endorse candidates. Join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong, safe, fair and vibrant.*"
6. If *partnering* with another entity, the League should take the lead in communicating with the candidates. This includes:
  - a. sending *correspondence to the candidates* in a traceable form (USPS delivered, signed mail receipt or email returned mail receipt)
  - b. clearly articulating the "*ground rules*" for inclusion in the League's Voters' Guide – e.g.:
    - i. space limitations are included in the letter to the candidates so candidates know any responses over xxx word/character limit will be truncated at that number;
    - ii. there will be no editing for spelling mistakes, grammar, etc so candidates can not say their answers were "changed" by the League;
    - iii. what will be printed if the candidate does not respond – "No response from candidate";
    - iv. which specific races will be included in the Voters' Guide; and,

- v. what criteria were used for determining which candidates would be included in the Voters' Guide. (The League Board should establish criteria well in advance.)
7. Voters' Guides should *not only be distributed in hard copy, but they should also be made available online*, through individual League Web sites and/or partner Web sites. LWVUS will also include every League's Voters' Guide on VOTE411.org. For inclusion on VOTE411.org submit your Voters' Guide to [VoterInfo@lwv.org](mailto:VoterInfo@lwv.org). Providing information online ensures that the information can reach a broader audience than print distribution alone and may be a great way to get other organizations or media to link to your Web site.
8. *All partners should be encouraged to publicize the Voters' Guide before it is available* – e.g. "Look for your LWV and xxx partner(s) Voters' Guide on xx day" (shortly before Election Day).
9. *Any disclaimers should be prominently displayed*. Examples of various disclaimers are provided below.
10. *Partner with a media outlet* to increase the distribution of your Voters' Guide. (See section: Best Practices: Partnering with Media Outlets for full discussion)

### **C. Funding Your Voters' Guide**

1. Education Fund monies may be used to underwrite the costs of most, if not all, of your Voters' Guide. You are encouraged to use some general League funds to cover the specific cost of including a League membership "ad" in your Voters' Guide. For example if your Voters' Guide is 10 pages long and you include a half-page membership ad, then 5% of the total cost of producing your Voters' Guide (printing and distribution) should be paid for with general League funds. Be sure legal constraints on giving and receiving money for election-related activities are fully understood especially tax-deductible contributions.
2. The approach used by the LWVUS/LWVEF Board on fundraising offers some guidance to your own approach and includes the following policy: "The LWVUS/LWVEF shall not enter into any financial relationship (investment, fundraising, cause-related marketing, gift solicitation or gift acceptance) which is incompatible with the principles, priorities and mission of the LWVUS/LWVEF. Management shall exercise appropriate discretion when identifying and soliciting prospective donors and partners." This practice helps avoid conflicts of interest and retains the public trust in League activities and publications.
3. Seek neutral community underwriting or in-kind donations from businesses or community organizations – e.g. printing and design/layout. Be sure to recognize these sponsors in your Voters' Guide.
4. Earn income by selling Voters' Guides and other voter service materials in bulk quantity to business and industry, organizations, labor unions, political parties and/or individuals. If you sell to a political party make sure that the terms offered are the same for all parties and candidates.
5. Leagues are seeking ways to fund their Voters' Guides and some consider advertising and/or partnerships with other organizations. *The best practice is to avoid candidate advertisement in your Voters' Guides altogether*. Your Board *should not* accept any advertising that includes an electioneering message or any express advocacy. Some partners, such as media partners, may insist on paying for the space through advertising. In such cases, the state or local Board should use its own judgment and discretion in deciding whether to accept advertisements, including candidate advertisements.

*If your Board is considering allowing advertising in your Voters' Guide, consider the following.*

- a. **Types of advertisements:** What is your League willing to accept—e.g. products or services only advertisements (shampoo, cookies, automobiles, realtors, banks, etc.) and not willing to accept—e.g. candidate advertisements (Vote for Wonder Woman on November 1st, etc.) or political/issue advertisements (political parties or advocacy groups, etc.)
- b. **Placement of advertisements:** Although LWVUS/EF advises against the inclusion of candidate ads in your Voters’ Guides, if they are acceptable to your Board, minimize the chance that the advertising could be perceived as favoring one candidate or party over another. Consider:
  - i. All advertisements must be confined to a specific section of the Voters’ Guide such as the inside panel of the last page only or a single page elsewhere in the Voters’ Guide;
  - ii. Candidate advertisements may only appear on pages associated with that candidate;
  - iii. Support from any candidate or political party/organization may only be acknowledged through a listing of supporters on the inside of the back page; or;
  - iv. Other criteria your Board develops.
- c. **Advertisement specifications:** Are different sized advertisements allowed at different prices, are color and/or black and white ads allowed at different prices, etc.? Might some of these differences result in an appearance of a League preference for one candidate or party more than another?
- d. **Promotion of availability of advertising space:** Will the League (and/or partner) actively solicit support from corporations? Will the League alert all candidates of this opportunity in their communications about participating in the Voters’ Guide? Will the League decide on a case-by-case approach as potential advertisers approach the League? (This case-by-case approach should only apply to product and service advertisements.) Will another approach be approved by the state/local Board?
- e. **Acceptance of Advertisements:** Will advertisements be accepted on a first come first serve basis, or if candidate/political advertising is allowed will they be accepted only on an equal basis (e.g. Leagues cannot run ads for candidates for only one party), etc.
- f. **General Principles:**
  - i. Leagues that accept advertising *should insert the word “advertising” above or below any advertisement.*
  - ii. Fees associated with advertising are *not tax-deductible.*
  - iii. Leagues should either *display information* in the Voters’ Guide regarding the process the league used to promote and accept advertising, and/or direct readers to place on your Web site where they may learn more about your process.
  - iv. Leagues should also prominently *display a disclaimer* such as “Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, service mark, manufacturer, candidate, issue, or otherwise, does not constitute or imply endorsement, recommendation or favoring by the LWV of XX.”

6. If a League has raised more than enough funds to cover the costs of their Voters' Guide, the *remaining tax-deductible funds* may be used for other Education Fund activities.

#### **D. Partnering With Media Outlets**

1. *Appeal to their self-interest* to publish voter information as a service to their readers/listeners. Media outlets want the public to use their resources, to see them as "serving the community" and the League adds tangible, trusted recognition to their own name and this effort through affiliating and collaborating together on Voters' Guides (or other voter service activities).
2. *Make sure you have a written contract:*
  - a. Signed by your League President and the media partner(s).
  - b. Clearly articulates the "ground rules" (noted above); that the League will provide ready-to-print materials and credibility; the rules regarding publishing LWV material in its entirety (e.g. the partner may make no changes to the text); specifies dates of publication; distribution of the Voters' Guide both in print and online; includes any costs that LWV might incur; states that League nonpartisanship and mission statements, and includes any disclaimers specifies how contributions/sponsors will be acknowledged, including in-kind support (if necessary); states how and what type of advertisements may be included; specifies that no endorsements may be included; specifies that the League name, logo and contact information will be included; and reaches an agreement on space limitations and candidate races to be covered.
  - c. Clearly delineates the League's role/responsibilities vs. the partner's role/responsibilities.
  - d. Including any publicity the partner(s) will undertake (e.g. "Look for your LWV and xxx paper, xxx TV Voter's Guide on xx day (shortly before Election Day).
3. Although *the contract will state which races will be covered* in the joint Voters' Guide, the League might decide to cover more races and include them on the League Web site.
4. Leagues should be aware that *many media outlets endorse candidates and accept candidate and political advertising*, and although the League can and should require that no candidate endorsements appear within the Voters' Guides, the League has no control over what is included in the rest of the media partners' online or print materials.
5. *If partnering with a newspaper:*
  - a. Ideally, the newspaper would cover the costs of printing the Voters' Guide as a special insert in their newspaper.
  - b. Leagues are encouraged to try to get extra copies of the insert printed for distribution through libraries and schools, community organizations and reaching out to diverse audiences.
  - c. Some Leagues have contributed to the cost of printing the Voters' Guide in a newspaper but Leagues are not encouraged to offer to do so at the outset of the discussions. However, Leagues should be prepared to respond to this request if it arises. As part of your negotiations, it is helpful to quantify your League's contribution to the total "cost of undertaking a Voters' Guide." According to the reputable nonprofit association, Independent Sector, the estimated value of volunteer time in 2006 was \$18.77 per hour. If there is a fee in the end, this fee should be included in the contract as well.

## LWVUS: Defining “Advocacy” vs. “Lobbying”

- Available at: <http://www.lwv.org/content/defining-advocacy-vs-lobbying>

It is common for Leagues to support their advocacy activities with only non-charitable contributions. However, this is unnecessary. Leagues may, and are encouraged, to use charitable contributions to support their non-lobbying advocacy activities. Advocacy encompasses pleading for or against causes, as well as supporting or recommending positions.

LWVUS policy recommends against using charitable funds for any lobbying even though it is legal within strictly defined limits. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between the broad concept of advocacy and lobbying, which is a specific advocacy technique. While lobbying can be part of an advocacy strategy, advocacy does not necessarily include lobbying.

Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation, including both legislation that has already been introduced in a legislative body and specific legislative proposals that the League may oppose or support. There are two types of lobbying: direct lobbying and grassroots lobbying.

To constitute direct lobbying, a communication must either:

- 1) be directed to a legislator, their staff or other governmental employee who may participate in the formulation of legislation,
  - a. AND refer to
  - b. AND express a view on specific legislation;

OR

- 2) Be directed to the general public,
  - a. AND refer to
  - b. AND express a view on a specific referenda or other ballot measure.

To constitute grassroots lobbying a communication must be:

- 1) Directed to the general public,
  - a. AND refer to
  - b. AND express a view on specific legislation,
  - c. AND include a statement that directs readers to contact their legislators or include the contact information for a legislator or employee of a legislative body.

Most other activities promoting League positions that do not fall within the strict definitions of lobbying noted above are general advocacy and may be funded by charitable contributions. One important caveat is Leagues are advised to keep clear lines between voters’ service activities and advocacy activities. For example, Leagues that have taken a position on a ballot measure should not include that position in their Voters’ Guide.

## **Disclosure of League Contribution to Support or Oppose a Ballot Issue**

### **Disclaimer**

Any sign, newspaper advertisement, literature, and so forth that a local League puts out in support of or in opposition to a question or issue that is on the ballot should include the name of the local League and contact information for that League.

If a local League spends operating (501 c 4) money to support or oppose a local ballot question or issue in accordance with a League position, the local League must file a contribution disclosure form. Please contact your local Board of Elections for detailed information about this requirement and the timing for completing the necessary form.

## APPENDIX A

### Sample Letter to Candidate

*(on local League stationery)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization with a deep concern for informed voter participation in government. In line with this policy, we will make available to the voters of \_\_\_\_\_ a voter guide on candidates and issues for the \_\_\_\_\_ election, 20\_\_.

Each candidate is requested to complete the enclosed questionnaire. (Please keep a copy for your files.) Please return it to the League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_ at the address given above. In order that all candidates may be treated alike, please use the questionnaire form, taking careful note of the word limitations, and return it no later than \_\_\_\_\_. You may download an electronic version of the questionnaire at [Web site] or request an electronic version by e-mailing [e-mail address]. E-mailing your responses to this address, in addition to mailing your signed copy, will save the League a great deal of time and would be much appreciated.

Inasmuch as the League will not alter, edit, correct, or evaluate any candidate's reply, each candidate is solely responsible for the text they submit, including the truth of his/her statements. The League cannot use any campaign material. Your answers are accepted only with the understanding that the published material will not be used in any way that may be deemed to be an endorsement by the League of Women Voters of your candidacy or views.

The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920. It is a national, nonpartisan organization dedicated to encouraging active and informed participation of citizens in government. The League does not endorse, oppose, or evaluate any candidate or party. By submitting your candidate questionnaire, you and your campaign organization, agree not to imply at anytime, either verbally, in advertising or in writing, the League's endorsement of your candidacy.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Voter Service Chair  
(phone #)

Enclosures  
(self-addressed envelope)

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Candidate Questionnaire

#### League of Women Voters of \_\_\_\_\_ 2012 Voters' Guide Questionnaire

**NOTE:** This response CANNOT be published unless YOU have signed it in the space provided at the end of the questionnaire. By submitting your candidate questionnaire, you and your campaign organization agree not to imply at anytime, either verbally, in advertising or in writing, the League's endorsement of your candidacy.

OFFICE:

PARTY:

(fill in only if applicable to your election)

NAME:

AGE:

ADDRESS:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER(S): (will not be printed in voter guide)

#### **Biographical Information**

Answers in the following are limited to 50 words FOR THE THREE SECTIONS COMBINED.

OCCUPATION:

EDUCATION:

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OFFICE:

Total word limitation of 50 words for the above three sections. DO NOT USE ABBREVIATIONS except for degrees: B.A., Ph.D., M.D., etc. Otherwise, OU would be two words for Ohio University; "the," "a," "is" are counted as one word each.

#### **Question for Voters' Guide**

The answer to the question may not exceed **150 words**. THE WORD LIMIT MUST BE OBSERVED. Words over the limit will be cut off in published information.

**[Insert question]**

*[Note: Leagues may want to provide an e-mail address where responses can be sent to avoid retyping and checking, but obtaining a signed hard copy is highly recommended.]* To verify your attempts to communicate and verify the receipt of all responses, **it is recommended that Local Leagues keep copies of all correspondence from candidates, including emails.**

Released for distribution for 2012 Election.

Candidate's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE MUST BE RETURNED
NO LATER THAN:
TO:

## APPENDIX C

### 2014 OHIO SENATE DISTRICTS

#### 2014 Primary/General Elections-terms end in 2014, 2018

- 1 – No League
- 3 – Metro Columbus
- 5 – Darke County, Greater Dayton Area
- 7 – Cincinnati Area
- 9 – Cincinnati Area
- 11 – Toledo/Lucas Co
- 13 – Oberlin Area
- 15 – Metro Columbus
- 17 – Chillicothe/Ross Co
- 19 – Delaware Co, Metro Columbus
- 21 – Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area,  
Shaker Heights
- 23 – Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area,  
Shaker Heights
- 25 - Cleveland Area, Cuyahoga Area,  
Shaker Heights
- 27 – Hudson, Wayne County
- 29 – Canton Area
- 31 – No League
- 33 – Greater Youngstown