

Proposed 2017-2019 LWVO Positions & Priorities (“Program”)

Based on program planning responses from 17 of 31 local Leagues, the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Ohio recommends the following Positions and Priorities (a.k.a. “Program”) for 2017-2019.

Existing Program

The LWVO board recommends retaining all positions. No Leagues recommended dropping a position.

Review or Update a Position

A review or update is a study of limited scope to evaluate a position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another position. The League should consider:

- Is the position sufficient as it stands to achieve the desired change?
- In there a need and is there member interest in altering the position?
- Are there enough interested members to form the core of that study committee?

Four Leagues (Marion, Akron Area, Greater Cleveland, and Kent) recommended updating the Juvenile Justice position. While these four Leagues shared a view that the Juvenile Justice position should be updated to be more inclusive, their suggestions varied as to how – e.g., the Akron Area League recommended “deleting words, ‘regardless of race or ethnicity’” and Greater Cleveland recommended inserting additional language (in italics) “Ohio supports the right of juveniles to unbiased treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, or *gender identification*.” Upon review, while the LWVO Board appreciates the rationale behind such a change, it is not clear what update would best satisfy this concern. Therefore, the is a **non-recommended item**. However, the state board suggests that these Leagues might want to confer with each other to harmonize their suggested changes into some agreed upon update language to bring forward as a motion at the state Convention in May.

Other reviews/updates suggested were: State and Government Finance and Taxation, Hazardous waste, State Government Finance and Taxation, Water and/or Land Use, Great Lakes Ecosystem and Right to Work. Since these update areas had only one local League supporting them, they are **non-recommended**.

New Studies

A new study should be a critical issue for which we lack a position to take action and thus needs a study. A local League may recommend the topic of the study, the scope/parameters of the study and rationale for pursuing a position on the topic. Consider:

- Is there a national position that could be used for this?
- Would the study result in a position that could then influence state legislative actions?
- Could the League make a unique contribution in this area or does it duplicate the work of others?
- Are there enough interested members in your League to form the core of the committee?

The Cincinnati Area League recommended a new study on Charter Schools and is willing to work on it. While Cincinnati feels that Ohio needs a position on Charter Schools, they did not feel that the Florida position on Charter Schools would fit Ohio.

For the reasons explained in the next section below, LWV Ohio believes concurrence is appropriate and thus the suggestion for a study of charter schools is a **non-recommended** item.

Other news studies suggested were: Health Services, Lame Duck Legislative Sessions Study, Mass Transit in Ohio. Since these areas had only one local League supporting them, they are **non-recommended**.

Concurrence

Concurrence is a means by which a League can adopt a position from another League that was the product of study and consensus. Concurrence can be a more efficient and speedier way to reach a position if we agree with the other League's process and outcome.

LWV Hudson brought forward a recommendation to concur with the Charter School position from LWV Florida, that was the result of LWV Florida's study and consensus. Seven other Leagues (Marion, Metro Columbus, Athens, Toledo, Akron Area, Lima and Greater Cleveland) supported concurrence with the LWV Florida Charter School position.

As was noted above, the Cincinnati Area LWV and others raised concern about whether concurrence would be proper because the wording of the LWV Florida position doesn't precisely match the existing structure of Ohio's school system. LWV Ohio consulted with LWVUS on this question and was advised that concurrence is appropriate when a League agrees with the *principles and rationale* of another League's position. We are free to make changes to the wording to harmonize it with Ohio so long as we retain the principles of LWV Florida's position.

Recommendation: Thus, based on this guidance from the national League, the LWVO Board **recommends** concurrence with the LWV Florida position on Charter Schools with edits. The recommended edits are appended to the end of this document as Attachment A.

Legislative Priorities:

The LWVO board reviewed the recommendations from local Leagues for priority advocacy topics. Ten Leagues recommended Congressional redistricting reform for an advocacy priority. Two Leagues suggested Secondary Education and Charter Schools.

Based on the large percentage of participating Leagues' recommendation, Congressional Redistricting is a **recommended advocacy priority**.

Attachment A

LWV OHIO RECOMMENDS CONCURRENCE WITH LWV FLORIDA'S POSITION ON CHARTER SCHOOLS

LWV Florida developed a position on Charter Schools following a 2012-2013 statewide study on school choice (available online at <http://thefloridavoter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/LWV-Consensus-Report-w-Positions.pdf>). LWV Florida initiated the study to better understand the oversight of public moneys that are allocated to charter schools and other private education institutions. How these alternative educational programs align with the Florida constitution's requirement for a uniform, high quality school system of free public schools was a concern for LWV Florida, and that has similarly been an issue in Ohio given the long history of litigation over compliance with the Ohio Constitution's requirement for equitable and adequate school funding (the DeRolph case). Like our sister League in Florida, LWV Ohio recognizes first and foremost that is a paramount duty of the state to provide for education and that charter schools, which are established as public schools and funded by the public, must be accountable to the public.

Ohio provides for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality school system as the paramount duty of the state. The League of Women Voters of Ohio supports the following principles to help ensure that public education can fulfill its duty to Ohio's children.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

An elected school board should provide oversight and direction to all educational systems in each district. Ideally, we believe charter schools should be under the oversight of a locally elected school board, but, barring that, at a minimum they should be under the oversight of an elected state Board of Education. The school board should have the authority and the responsibility to require fiscal, management and procedural accountability and enforcement of charter terms and conditions. State authorization of local charter schools in addition to local traditional public schools may require more funding than currently provided in legislation and a clarification of authority regarding enforcement of charter provisions.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of charter schools is to serve unmet needs and to offer innovative instructional methods. Local needs are best identified by the local school district as part of its strategic plan. To avoid inefficiency through duplicative programs or to have insufficient funding for either program to be successful, charter schools should serve as a complement to not a competitor of traditional public schools.

MANAGEMENT:

Charter schools operate under a contract with an authorized sponsoring entity and are expected to produce certain results that are set forth in each school's charter. Since they are public schools, management structures and requirements should be similar. Both traditional and charter public

schools need to have flexibility to develop schedules and curricula. The community is best served if the compensation for instructional personnel is within a maximum and minimum guideline within the district to assure quality of personnel and retention in the classroom.

A public charter school should have local representation on the governing board, at least one community resident answerable to school parents and community and not be governed by an entity with no ties or accountability to the community it serves. Charter schools should be supervised by either local school district or Ohio Department of Education staff with enforcement powers to ensure that they conform to state regulations. These regulations should include fiscal responsibilities and adherence to building code as well as school admissions and dismissal policies and procedures. This supervision may require additional funds for oversight. Public charter schools must have appropriately certified full or part time instructors on staff before applying for public funding.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

Both traditional and charter public schools must report teacher turnover and student mobility rates, in addition to end of year student grade retention. Charter public schools must report financial information in a format that is adequate for comparison with other public schools, particularly regarding facilities ownership and management contracts. Teachers and administrators of ALL public schools, including charters, should meet certification and qualification levels commensurate with their duties and roles. All schools, regardless of size, should report state student assessment test scores and other accepted indicators of student achievement levels.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Administrators and governing board members of all public schools, including charter, must not directly supervise or determine compensation for family members. Members of the charter schools' governing board MUST NOT have any financial interest in the charter school. Legislators serving on education or appropriation committees must recuse themselves on votes related to charter school finance if they have any financial interest in one or more charter schools.

FACILITIES AND FUNDING:

As a recipient of public education funds charter schools should meet the procurement standards applicable to other public institutions as stated in statute and rule regarding competitive bids, purchasing of services, equipment, supplies and sites. Records of all transaction and procedures should meet all public records laws for full disclosure. Charter schools that acquire their facilities using public funds must assure that the facility reverts to public ownership at termination of the charter. If the facility is subject to a mortgage, the mortgage must disclose and protect the public's interest in the facility. A conversion of an existing public school to a public charter school should only be authorized by the local governing school board retaining full public ownership of the facility and the assets associated with the school. A public charter school may

be housed in a religious institution so long as secular identity is maintained and the student body reflects broad racial/ethnic/religious and economic diversity.