

2021-2022 LWV Ohio State Convention Planning

(By-Laws, Positions and Priorities)

TO: Local League Presidents

FROM: League of Women Voters of Ohio

In order to prepare for State Convention, we need all local Leagues to review several items. In this packet, you will find all the materials you need.

A. Overall timeline

B. By-Laws

- a. Letter from the LWVO By-Laws Committee with procedure for recommending a change**
- b. Current changes based on LWVUS 2020 Convention**

C. Positions as found in Agenda for Action

- a. Definitions and Procedures for Updates**
- b. Definitions and procedure for recommending a new study**
- c. Definitions of terms used in review of current positions**
- d. Procedure for review of positions**

D. Legislative Priorities

- a. Guidance in recommending priorities**
- b. Your League's priority and rationale**

TIMELINE

- November—mid-February** Local Leagues review by-laws, positions, and past priorities at a Positions and Priorities: Looking Ahead to Convention meeting. This can be a regular meeting, an open board meeting or a special meeting. This is a members only activity.
- Local Leagues that think they might suggest updates, concurrences or new studies might want to hold their meeting early in order to gather support for their proposal from other Leagues. Local Leagues may lobby other Leagues to support suggestions they might have.
- Feb 28, 2021** **Deadline for local League responses. Please make sure your local League board has approved the final report with all your recommendations. Please use the form online at <https://forms.gle/gjnPEndzfrwnxmJ37>. If you are unable to complete the form online, please return your report via email to lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org.**
- Early March 2021** State By-laws and Priority Planning Committees compile reports.
- March 13, 2021** State board considers the recommendations from local Leagues and creates a Proposed Statement of Positions and Priorities
- April-May 2021** Local Leagues review the Proposed Priorities. They may wish to use the League network to rally support for recommended and non-recommended items.

May 2021

State Convention delegates debate and adopt a 2021-2023 positions, priorities and By-Laws.

BYLAWS

Dear League Members:

Our State Convention is approaching next May. Before each state convention you have an opportunity to review our LWVO bylaws. Please review the below current state by-laws to make suggestions for updates. Your input is extremely important.

Bylaws can be found on the following link:

[http://stage.lwv-pa.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/lwvo bylaws approved by 2017 convention 0.pdf](http://stage.lwv-pa.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/lwvo%20bylaws%20approved%20by%202017%20convention%200.pdf)

*Bylaw amendments must be submitted by a local League board or ALU. **Individuals may not submit bylaw amendments.** After your board has reached agreement, submit your proposed amendment(s) to the bylaws with the following information (contained on report form for this complete packet at <https://forms.gle/gjnPEndzfrwnxmJ37>):*

- *Your League name and state, and your League ID number*
- *Approval from League leadership*
- *Your name and contact information*
- *The specific **Article** and **Section** being amended*
- *Quote current bylaw and your proposed changes*
- *Provide a rationale for each amendment*
- *Use [] **brackets** to denote words to be deleted*

The committee is requiring all suggestions by **February 28, 2021**. LWVO Board will be discussing these to make the official recommendation at its March meeting. Changes will be voted on at the state convention in May.

By-Laws Changes from LWWUS Convention

The following bylaws changes were made at the national convention in June. LWWO (and all Local League) By-Laws Articles 1-3 are required to mirror the LWWUS bylaws. These are the changes that were approved at national convention:

POLICIES

Article I

Name: The name of this organization shall be League of Women Voters of the United States, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWWUS.

Article II

Sec. 1. Purposes. The purposes of the LWWUS are:

- 1 To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. [and]
- 2 To act on selected governmental issues.

Sec. 2. [Political Policy.] **POLICIES. THE POLICIES OF THE LWWUS ARE:**

- 1 POLITICAL POLICY.** The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.
- 2 DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION POLICY. THE LEAGUE IS FULLY COMMITTED TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE—IN PRINCIPLE AND IN PRACTICE—WITH LWWUS' DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY.**

Article III

MEMBERSHIP

Sec. 2. Types of Membership.

- 1 *Voting Members.* Persons at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWWUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall

be life members excused from the payment of dues[.]; **(4) THOSE WHO ARE STUDENTS ARE DEFINED AS INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED EITHER AS FULL OR PART TIME WITH AN ACCREDITED INSTITUTION.**

The following changes were made, but there is no requirement that these paragraphs mirror those of LWVUS, and therefore they are changes that may be made at LWVO's discretion:

Article XIII

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 2. Financial Support.

[D. The per member payment for a member who is a student shall be equal to one-half the per member payment amount determined at convention. A student is defined as an individual enrolled either full or part-time in an accredited institution.]

[E.] D. The LWVUS may authorize the payment of a designated part of each per member payment to the League of Women Voters Education Fund.

[F.] E. A state and local League shall be excused from making a per member payment for life members[.] **AND STUDENTS.**

Article VI

WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION

Sec. 3. [Disposition of Funds. Upon Dissolution, the funds of a state League shall be paid to the LWVUS and the funds of a local League shall be paid to the state League in which it is organized.] **DISSOLUTION. UPON**

WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION, LEAGUES SHALL FOLLOW LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LAW TO CLOSE OUT. ANY REMAINING FUNDS SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE STATE LWV, LWVUS OR LWVEF AS

APPROPRIATE. Funds held by an ILO shall be prorated among the member Leagues.

Article VIII

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEC. 3. DUTIES. IN EXECUTING THE DUTIES OF THEIR OFFICE, BOARD MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT APPLICABLE LAWS AND

REGULATIONS AS WELL AS LEAGUE BYLAWS, MISSION, POLICIES, PRINCIPLES, POSITIONS, STANDARDS, AND PROCEDURES. BOARD

MEMBERS WHO DO NOT SHALL BE COUNSELED. IF VIOLATIONS PERSIST,

THEY MAY BE REMOVED FROM OFFICE BY A TWO-THIRDS VOTE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Once the LWVO Board has received all the suggestions, we will review them for consistency with our mission and appropriateness for the bylaws of a nonprofit advocacy organization. Those suggested bylaws that meet these guidelines will be forwarded for ratification at the LWVO May 2021 Convention.

POSITIONS: THE PROCESS

The biennial Position and Priority Review is a chance for Local Leagues to give policy direction to the LWVO board and staff regarding **state** League positions (you are asked to review national positions in alternate years). Grassroots planning is a unique League feature. We ask you to give thoughtful consideration to the positions and activity that LWVO has taken historically, and to provide feedback based on the unique perspective of your members. This link will take you to the complete LWVO positions (**Agenda for Action**): <http://bit.ly/2019-2021-LWVO-Agenda-For-Action>

One of the highlights of state Convention is the adoption of a program that will position the League as a leader in advocacy and education in Ohio. In selecting issues that are important, lively and relevant, you can ensure that the League will have an impact on the significant policy issues facing our state.

Grassroots planning is a unique League feature. The program planning meeting is an every-member opportunity to review existing League positions. These positions are important in taking action at both a local and state level. The selection of priorities in regard to issues helps determine where we will spend time, talent, energy and money in planning an overall legislative strategy. We cannot focus on all our issues.

It's important that each Local League take the time to consider, complete and submit a response form. The Position and Priority Review meeting is an every-member opportunity to review existing League positions and select the issues upon which League will spend time, talent, energy and money. Based on local League responses, a proposed program will be developed by the LWVO board of directors. At Convention, recommended and non-recommended items will be discussed and debated. Delegates will then adopt the 2021-2023 state positions and priorities.

Thank you for participating in this important process! This document is intended to help you structure your meeting. It can be used as literally as makes sense for your own group.

Special Circumstances and Procedures

Updates and studies can be problematic if not given sufficient time for development. The support of other local Leagues can play a role in allowing for a recommendation for acceptance at convention. Yet, that is not the final word as we have seen at the last state convention. A League can bring a new study to the floor (the Arming School Personnel Study as an example). This is a grassroots organization.

Proposing a New Study

It is anticipated that a League suggesting a study for a new position will form the core study committee for the work involved. But that committee also needs representation from other areas of the state. **Therefore, there must be support from other Leagues. Getting that support at this stage is very important.**

Studies typically last 12-24 months and have budgets of approximately \$200-300 each year to reimburse study members for their expenses. They have become less costly as we have been able to use technology to meet, share research findings, consult experts, edit documents and assemble the consensus study packet.

A new study should be a critical issue for which we lack a position to take action. It should reflect an essential part of our mission (such as the recent new position on primary elections) or add to the scope of our important positions (such as the recent concurrence on charter schools).

Start with the topic of the study. Define its scope. Then start with these questions:

- Is there a national position/s that could be used for advocacy here? If no, proceed. If yes, then maybe what is needed is a guide or rubric to help with advocacy support.
- Would the study result in a position that could then influence state legislative actions? Our positions support us in changing policy at the state level.
- Could League make a unique contribution in this area or does it duplicate the work of others? We cannot do everything. Our positions and priorities are weighed against our nonpartisan nature and our main mission of Making Democracy Work. We do have positions that allow us

to partner or lend support to other organizations to take the lead on some issues.

Next set of questions to ask:

- Is there already another League's position on the issue? Is the position based on the same circumstances as Ohio? If there are several positions, is one better for Ohio? Can parts of several positions be combined? Finding Leagues that already have studied the issue and have a position short cuts the process. There is still a need for a committee to review the positions and formulate how it might look for Ohio. The procedure now is not a study but a **concurrence (see definition page)**. We used a concurrence for our position on charter schools. The base position was from LWV Florida.
- Are there enough interested members in your League to form the core of the committee?
- Do we have financial resources to study the issue?

If you have now gotten to this point and want to proceed, take these steps as early as possible. Start with a document explaining the study. Email that document to every League using the presidents list from the LWVO office. The instructions should state that if a League supports you, they should indicate that support by also requesting a study, or concurrence, in the appropriate place. This gives Leagues a chance to discuss the issue as part of their meeting on by-laws, positions and priorities.

Your document should include:

- Subject of study
- Rationale
- Request for study or concurrence
- If concurrence, the state and position (include electronic link)

Proposing an Update/Review

When you read through Agenda for Action, you can see the date a position was adopted and each time it was revised. Some of our positions are very comprehensive and actually reference policies, documents, agreements, etc. Sometimes terminology has changed. Sometimes the scope of the issue has expanded or new research has redefined the issue.

An Update requires a study of limited scope in light of the new information. An example of this was our water position that referenced agreements that have been replaced with new agreements and policy statements. For changes in the documents cited in a position due to replacement or expiration, etc.(example: our interbasin transfer of water position).: A committee of experts need to review the replacement agreements, etc. to see if the update just needs these documents to be changed. This is in process with our water/Great Lakes positions. The new agreements/documents in no way affect the position itself. Another example would be terminology changes whereby a group would review the position, inserting the new terminology.

If the review is needed because there have been substantial changes within the issue, then these considerations are important:

- Is the position sufficient as it stands to achieve the desired change?
- Is 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 from your League?
- Do we have financial resources to update this position (about \$200 per year)?

Building Support for Your Recommendation(s)

To be a recommended item at the 2021 Convention, a program recommendation must have significant support among Ohio Leagues as indicated on local Leagues' Report Forms. Therefore, LWVO urges Leagues to build support for their recommendations for a review/update, a study, or for dropping a position by reaching out to other Ohio Leagues during the planning process December-February and asking them to make the same recommendation.

Definitions

Actions that can be taken on positions:

- **Retention of Current Positions:** Current positions not recommended to be reviewed/updated or dropped will be assumed to be recommended to be retained as is.
- **Review/ Update:** This is a study of limited scope to evaluate a position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another position.
- **Dropping a Position:** Are there positions that are no longer relevant/ needed?

New Study vs. Concurrence

- **Study** is the process of formally investigating and discussing a body of facts (including policy implications) whether supporting or contravening a working hypothesis, leading to or including a statement of position. The committee formulates a group of questions to be discussed. Based on the consensus around the questions, a position is formulated.
- **Concurrence** is an agreement among a substantial number of members, reached after study, leading to acceptance, reaffirmation, or rejection of a previously formulated statement of position.

League Response Form: 2021-2023 State Program Planning

Please complete this form at <https://forms.gle/gjnPEndzfrwnxmJ37> by **Feb 28, 2021**. If you are unable to return the form online, please email it to: lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org.

Contact information:

League _____

Board approval Date _____

Submitted by _____

Title _____

Phone number _____

Email _____

● **Recommendation to Review/ Update a Position:**

No recommendation _____ *or*

One item to be reviewed/updated (from the list on page 6)

Rationale:

Are there enough interested members in your League to form the core of the study committee? Yes/ No

● **Recommendation to Drop a Position:**

No recommendation _____ *or*

If your League recommends dropping a position, please complete the following: Position to drop:

Rationale:

● **Recommendation for a New Study:**

Please refer to "Definitions and Things to Consider". Also, please double check to make sure LWWUS does not already have a relevant position.

No recommendation _____ *OR*

Topic for the recommended study:

Scope (what should and should not be covered)

Rationale (why timely and important):

Members willing to work on study:

- **Recommendation for Concurrence:**

No recommendation _____ *OR*

We recommend concurrence with LWV _____
on the following position:

Is there a place where it can be accessed electronically?

Rationale (why timely and important):

- **Legislative Priority:** Is there ONE position/issue that should have priority for state action in 2021-2023?

No one position should have priority _____ *OR*

Position that should have

priority _____

Rationale:

- **Methodology:** What method did your League use for program planning?

_____ Board meeting _____ Membership meeting _____ Other

(please describe) **Other:**

How many members in attendance?

Was the planning packet easy to understand? ____ yes _____ no

What suggestions do you have to improve future planning packets and processes?

Thank You!!!

Agenda for Action: <http://bit.ly/2019-2021-LWVO-Agenda-For-Action>

Position Summaries.....

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Legislative Priorities

Our priority right now is the election. Since this is a presidential election year and it is happening during a pandemic, voting issues have had to be front and center. We are prioritizing Making Democracy Work. Additionally, with the HB6 scandal coming to light, dark money will be an important focus as we move ahead.

The 2021 legislative year along with the results of the census, will focus on redistricting. We have fought long and hard to get us to this point and need to keep alert.

We have positions on lots of important issues. **In the action section of Agenda for Action, you can read how we have taken action on some of our issues.** Also, we have included in the email a summary of the lobbyists' reports. Not only do these reflect the importance of our positions, but show you where we have been able to put some of our energy.

As you discuss legislative priorities, we hope you will underscore the importance of the full Making Democracy Work® Campaign. At the national convention, delegates again fully supported the **League-wide Campaign for Making Democracy Work®: Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting.** It is our essential mission, and we are seeing how important it is here in Ohio.

Keeping that in mind, and considering all the other issues that have been active, your League may recommend **ONE** position that should have priority for state action in 2021-2023. Consider:

- Is this issue of paramount importance over the next two years?
- Can this issue be addressed most effectively through state (rather than federal/local) action?
- Are there local League members well informed about this issue/position and willing to advocate for it?
- Is this issue current (in step with the times and member thinking)?
- Can League make a real contribution, or will it merely duplicate the work of others?
- Will timing and political realities permit League to be effective on this issue?

Will pursuit of this issue support the ideals of diversity, equity & inclusion in League activity?

Board Involvement: The local Board approves all recommendations. A Board representative then completes the form and sends it in to LWVO. Only one form per League should be turned in.

Reminder: It is important for all Leagues to complete and submit a response form whether or not they recommend a legislative priority, review/update, study, or dropping a position. We need to know every League has discussed by-laws, positions and legislative priorities.

THE PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Purpose: To recommend which LWV Ohio positions should be retained or dropped and which, if any, new studies should be undertaken. To identify and recommend a priority issue.

Goals of the Meeting:

1. To increase member awareness of current LWVO positions (and national and local League positions if you'd like) through discussion of positions.
2. To engage in a healthy discussion, and to identify and recommend any positions that need to be dropped or updated; to make suggestions for issues that require new studies.
3. To prioritize the areas in which League should be most active at the state level for 2021-2023.

What You Will Need

A successful, productive Program Planning meeting requires a certain degree of effort by League leaders. You must be able to supply the information that leads to good decisions. A local board member with experience related to state program is the most appropriate person to prepare and chair the meeting. While this is a great way to introduce new members to League positions and process, have experienced members help with specific questions, and the history of some of our positions.

Two sample Program Planning meeting formats are outlined on the following pages. Both require the following:

- League members!
- Discussion Leader(s)
- In advance: a review of the full positions in *Agenda for Action* by discussion leader(s) and officers so that they can act as resource people during discussion of positions
- Recorder(s)
- Resources (ideally, at least one copy of each of the following for each small group, or multiple copies for large group): LWVO's positions as stated in *Agenda for Action* (<https://my.lwv.org/ohio/positions>) and LWVUS's positions as stated in *Impact on Issues* (<https://my.lwv.org/ohio>); local League program information. While additional copies of *Agenda for Action* and *Impact on Issues* are available

for purchase, members may also access the files on the lwvohio.org or the lwv.org websites listed above.

- A copy of the handout “Definitions and Things to Consider, for each member (included in packet)
- Flip-chart, blackboard or whiteboard
- A block of time!

Sample 1: Small Group Format for Program Planning Meeting (approximately 2 hours)

Modify this plan to meet the needs of your League.

Local Leagues might organize the Positions and Priorities Planning meeting around small group discussions. This is a two-and-a-half hour meeting. Think about how to make this meeting fun – food always helps!

- ♣ Sign-in and coffee—15 minutes
- ♣ Welcome and overview of meeting—5 minutes
- ♣ Small-group discussions on retain, drop, update—25 minutes
- ♣ Report their recommendations—15 minutes
- ♣ Break —10 minutes
- ♣ Small-group discussions on priorities—15 minutes
- ♣ Report their recommendations—20 minutes. At this point, it may be necessary to use some means to narrow your selections.
- ♣ Whole group discussion of new study possibilities—15 minutes
- ♣ Close

Divide the participants into three groups that correspond to the three state program categories: **1) Government; 2) Social Policy; and 3) Natural**

Resources.

- Provide each group with at least one copy of *Agenda for Action* and the complete national positions for reference. Summaries are not adequate. Also please make sure each member has a copy of the handout “Definitions and Things to Consider”
- Allow each group to decide on retaining, dropping or updating positions within “their” category. To keep the process flowing, appoint a recorder in each group who will make notes and report their recommendations to the whole group. Use a flip chart for a visual.
- Following a break and using the same groups, ask them to prioritize one position.
- Let each group report back to the whole group. Last, as a whole group, discuss issues to recommend for study, if any. Also, seek agreement on the ONE legislative priority, if any.

Sample 2: Whole Group Format for Program Planning Meeting

(approximately 2 1/4 hours)

Pre-meeting: Chair finds experienced members to read about each position and create a two minute summary of the position.

Meeting: Modify this plan to meet the needs of your League.

- ♣ Sign-in and coffee—15 minutes
- ♣ Welcome and overview of meeting—5 minutes
- ♣ Whole group discussion on ***retain, drop, update*** for each of the positions in each of the three Agenda for Action categories (1. Government, 2. Social Policy and 3. Natural Resources)—25 minutes for each program category. Each discussion begins with the summary of the position.
- ♣ Break (snack)—10 minutes
- ♣ Whole group discussions on priorities – 10 minutes for each Agenda for Action category, 5 min. to reach ONE priority overall
- ♣ Whole group discussion of new study possibilities – 10 minutes
- ♣ Close/ summarize

Provide each table with at least one copy of *Agenda for Action* and a copy of each of the three Agenda for Action category handouts. Provide each member with a copy of the “Definitions and Things to Consider” handout. You will also need to have, as reference, a copy of the national positions (*LWVUS Impact on Issues*). Summaries are not adequate.

To keep the process flowing, appoint a recorder who will take notes for the final report. Use a flip chart or chalkboard for a visual.

Following a break, prioritize one position for lobbying or state attention. Last, as a whole group, discuss any item to recommend for a study.