

League Guidelines for Members and Local Leagues Taking Action

Taking action for the public good is not only a cornerstone of the League's mission to advocate for sound public policy, it is also a good way to energize membership, achieve visibility in the community, and attract new members.

The League's principles and its positions at the local, state, and national levels are meant to be used. The principals are written broadly so that they will be applicable over time to specific circumstances.

Action Not Requiring Consultation

Local Leagues wishing to take official League action on public policy matters do not need to consult the other levels of League under these circumstances.

1. Action by a local League at the local level can be taken without consultation with the state or national League so long as that action is based on local, state, or national positions. The decision to take action on issues that affect only your League's geographic area rests with your local board.
2. Any action taken in response to an action request from state or national League does not require consultation. These requests are most often the form of e-mail. Action Alerts from the state or national office, but they may also appear in Voter articles or the Post Board and will be posted on the state and national Web sites, www.lwvohio.org and www.lwv.org respectively.
3. Any action regarding legislation on which the state League has already taken action does not require consultation. All recent action—including written testimony, news releases, and action alerts—is listed in the "Action" section of the state Web site, www.lwvohio.org. You do not need to consult with the state League to contact your state legislator on any of the matters listed.

*** Action Requiring Consultation***

Local Leagues wishing to take official League action on public policy matters must consult with the appropriate parties under these circumstances:

1. Action that would affect more than one League (such as those in your county, district, or region) requires consultation with the boards of the other Leagues in the area involved.
2. Action that would involve contact with state government officials (state senator or representative, the governor, etc.) where no action has been requested and no state action has been taken requires consultation with the state board. This can be as simple as a phone call to the state office, 877-LWV-OHIO.
3. Action that would involve contact with government officials at the national level (U.S. senator or representative, the President) where no action has been requested by LWVUS requires consultation with the national office. The national League maintains strict adherence to its current Issues for Emphasis. The state League would be happy to serve as a conduit for such a request.

The best rule of thumb is to consider, before taking action, if an elected official could possibly receive two conflicting messages from League on the same issue. If it's possible that more than one local League might respond to an issue of "local" concern, then consultation is a must. The League(s) being consulted must agree with the action, but need not join in the action. If agreement is not obtained, then action is not permissible.

Action on the Principles

The 1974 LWVUS Convention authorized action by local, state, and national Leagues on the basis of LWVUS principles. Since the principles evolved from and incorporate former League positions, the authorization for action is not a radical departure from action of all program positions.

Parts of the LWVUS principles dealing with taxation, economy, and international law are so general that action would require considerable member discussion. In these cases, specific action should only be taken in connection with League positions to which they apply.

Before using the principles as a basis for action, each League board will consider whether:

- a) members are informed;
- b) members agree with the proposed action;
- c) the action is appropriate in timing, need, and effectiveness; and
- d) other affected Leagues agree that the action results would extend beyond a League's own boundaries. Action under the principles requires authorization by the appropriate League board.