

POLICIES
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OAK RIDGE

February 9, 2010

(These policies should be reviewed/revised every other year.)

Purposes

The purposes of the League are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to study and act on selected issues.

Nonpartisanship

The protection of the League's nonpartisanship should be the primary consideration when Board members decide on personal political involvement. Key Board members [President, First Vice President, and chairs of Voter Service and Lunch with the League] should act "with discretion" as regards political coffees, rallies, petitions, and financial contributions. They should also refrain from public endorsement of political candidates or parties to avoid compromising the nonpartisanship policy of the LWV.

Other members of the Board should decide for themselves what, if any, political activities it is proper for them to engage in. Should a problem arise in which individual Board members feel uncertain, the matter should be discussed with the Board. The League Board should review cases in which actions of individual Board members are perceived to be in conflict with League policies. Board members who continue to act in violation of League policies will be asked to resign.

The Nominating Committee and the President(s) should inform a prospective member of the Board very carefully about the League policy.

Board members may serve on civic boards and commissions that do not require running under a political party label. However, the League Board should review cases in which decisions of the board or commission are perceived to be in conflict with League policies or positions.

Meetings

A general meeting is designed for the membership at large. Its purpose is primarily to conduct League business. Annual Meetings are open meetings, but only voting members in good standing may vote. An agenda will be available at the Annual Meeting.

Study committee meetings and Board meetings are open to all LWV members.

The LWVOR does not patronize establishments that discriminate on the basis of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Consensus (ref. *League Basics*, pages 13-14)

Consensus (member agreement) is a process whereby members participate in a group discussion of an issue. It is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall "sense of the group" as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions.

Since Consensus is attempted only after a sustained in-depth study and group discussion among a substantial number of members, Consensus shall be determined only after there have been two (2) meetings for the purpose of giving background information to the membership. The Board shall ensure that the League method of taking Consensus shall be explained at meetings where it is being attempted.

The Board shall ensure that at least one of its members attends each Consensus meeting, and a recorder shall be provided. The recorder, appropriate study committee members, and the President(s) shall prepare a statement of Consensus to be presented to the Board. The Board is responsible for the final wording of the consensus statement. If a strong minority opinion is expressed, it shall be included in the report.

The results of the local League Consensus on a state or national Consensus issue shall not be published in the local newsletter or be distributed to the local membership. It will be combined with other consensuses at the state or national level and will be reported as a state or national Consensus. The local position may not necessarily agree with the adopted official position.

Board members should not actively work against issues on which the LWVOR, LWVTN, and LWVUS have arrived at a Consensus and have a stated position.

Concurrence (ref. *League Basics*, pages 13-14)

Concurrence is the act of agreeing with--or concurring with--a statement or position. Concurrence can work in several ways. Groups of League members or League boards can concur with (1) recommendations of a study committee or a unit group, (2) decision statements formulated by League boards, or (3) positions reached by another League or Leagues.

As a general rule, background materials presenting the pros and cons on the issue being considered are provided to Leagues and members in the concurrence process. In area Leagues an issue relating to one jurisdiction is often studied by members living in that jurisdiction and, after those members have reached member agreement, the other members are asked to concur with the results.

Public Relations and Publicity

The President(s) is the official spokesperson for the LWVOR. Official statements shall be made for the League only by the President(s) or by someone authorized to do so by the President(s), the Board, or the Executive Committee. Individual League members may not speak for the LWV when making public statements. All requests for statements or spokespersons should be referred to the President(s). League members shall make no prior commitment of people or materials. The President(s) shall receive and approve a copy of all written material that goes to the public in the name of the League (with the exception of thank-you notes and routine correspondence).

Board

If possible, the President(s) shall attend National Convention, the State Convention, and State Council meetings. If unable to attend, the President(s) shall designate a head of the delegation. It is recommended that, if possible, a briefing meeting shall be held prior to these meetings.

Executive Board members should be encouraged to accept two consecutive one-year terms. It is recommended that the Board members and Off-Board Committee chairs be limited to four (4) consecutive years' service in the same position.

Committees

Committees may conduct business between regular meetings using e-mail, USPS mail, telephone, and other available means of communication, provided that all committee members are contacted and given a reasonable opportunity to respond. If any one committee member requests, a special meeting of the committee must be called. A complete account of business conducted by such means shall be presented at the next regular committee meeting.

Travel

As the LWVOR budget allows, registration fees, transportation, and lodging will be paid for members representing the local League at League-sponsored functions. Payment of additional costs, for example per diem, will be decided in each instance by the Board. Mileage shall be paid in accordance with the current IRS rate.

Membership

A membership directory should be published annually with appropriate updates. With the pertinent member's permission, changes shall be published in *The Voter*.

The LWVOR membership list is not to be used for purposes other than League business. A statement to this effect is to be included on the membership list.

Membership dues from new members joining after January 1 shall cover the remainder of the current year and the next fiscal year.

Publications

All League communications and publications shall bear the League name, a mailing address, the date, and the names of any major underwriters.

Complimentary copies of League publications shall be distributed at the discretion of the Board.

Records and Equipment

All League equipment shall be used for League-connected activities and under the direction of those persons designated by the President(s). If equipment is used for non-League activities, an appropriate charge may be levied.

Current working presidential files shall be turned over to the new President(s) prior to the start of the Fiscal year.

Job descriptions for Board members (and for Off-Board chairs) should be available to the incoming Nominating Committee chair.

Bills, receipts, and bank statements may be destroyed after 7 years.

A copy of every League communication concerning policy or program to be sent to the National Office shall have the prior approval of the local President(s). A copy shall be sent to the State Office.

Each Board member and Off-Board committee chair shall keep the local President(s) informed of his/her League activities.

A Board member shall be designated to check the Post Office mailbox at weekly intervals. Anyone who has mail should be notified as soon as practicable.

The Voter & LWVOR Web Site

Reports and Other Information

Information for *The Voter* and website may be submitted to the President throughout the month. Contingent on the President's approval, the information will be forwarded to the editor and webmaster. Inclusion will be at the discretion of the editor and webmaster, as space and time permit. Such information may include, but is not limited to, program and committee reports, member news, articles from Executive Committee members, membership information, League and community events, election results, and info from the State and National Leagues.

Reports that clearly advocate a position shall be accepted only if the League has reached consensus on the position that is advocated.

Annual Programs and Positions

A current list of programs of study and positions reached through consensus shall be posted on the web site, and listed at least once a year in *The Voter* or the membership directory.

Bulk Mail

A member anticipating using the League's bulk mailing permit should consult with the President(s) and Treasurer before a mailing is prepared. Questions concerning US bulk mail regulations should be referred to the Postmaster in charge of bulk mail.

Sitter

A sitter for a meeting will be arranged by a member of the meeting's planning committee when needed and upon appropriate notice. This sitter will be paid for by the League.

Annual Financial Review

A Financial Review Committee consisting of at least three League members, one of whom should be a current Board member, shall be formed at the beginning of each Fiscal Year. The committee shall review the financial reports from the previous fiscal year and make a formal report to the Board at the January Board meeting.

end