

LWV Ohio Positions and Priorities (Program): Looking Ahead to Convention

League program is the education and advocacy platform that members of the League of Women Voters adopt to support the mission of their organization.

League Principles are concepts of government supported by the League as a whole. They are the authorization for adoption of national, state, and local program. See [Principles](#).

Program includes both:

- Action to support League principles.
- Study of public policy issues, followed by action to support adopted positions.

The League grew out of the women's suffrage movement. The purpose was to encourage active and informed public participation in government through voter education and through a process of study and advocacy aimed at understanding and influencing public policy. These two separate but equal missions of the League, nonpartisan Voter Service, which neither supports nor opposes candidates or parties, and Program and Advocacy, continue to the present day.

As a grassroots organization, every two years members are asked to review League position statements and legislative priorities. This year we are reviewing the state positions in preparation for the LWVO Convention in June 2023. (Last year we reviewed local and national LWV positions.) The process this year is:

- Units will consider LWV Ohio positions and priorities in January.
- The local Program Development Committee (PDC) will review the Unit comments and make recommendations to the Cincinnati Area Board. PDC is made up of representatives of the local program committees, e.g. Education, Natural Resources, and County Government.
- The Cincinnati LWV Board will approve the recommendation and send it on to LWV Ohio where it will be combined with comments from around the state. The state Board will recommend program for approval at the Convention. However, it is possible for a non-recommended item to be introduced at 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. This link will take you to the complete LWVO positions (**Agenda for Action**): https://80922479-be27-41d3-8716-ae478aa45c69.filesusr.com/ugd/82d68a_ab739815d7fe4100a24013cda115f80d.pdf

A summary of the 17 positions is included as the last two pages of this Study Guide. During the Unit meetings, you will be asked whether any of these 17 positions should be deleted or updated.

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. 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.

Proposing a New Study

Units are also asked to consider whether a new study and position is needed. 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.**

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 armed school personnel) or add to the scope of our important positions (such as the recent concurrence on charter schools).

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/Great Lakes position that referenced agreements that have been replaced with new agreements and policy statements. A committee of experts needed to review the replacement agreements to see if the update just needed these documents to be changed or whether the new agreements were substantively different. Another example would be terminology changes where a group would review the position, inserting the new terminology.

Building Support for Your Recommendation(s)

To be a recommended item at the 2023 Convention, a program recommendation must have significant support among Ohio Leagues. 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.

Legislative Priorities

LWV Ohio priorities right now are voting rights, election security and redistricting. We are prioritizing Making Democracy Work.

We never thought we would still be dealing with redistricting, but that still needs to be our focus. We have fought long and hard to get us to this point and need to keep going as we are using temporary maps. 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.** You can also review the current social justice priorities on the LWVO website [Current Policy Priorities](#).

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, our local League can recommend **ONE additional** position that should have priority for state action in 2023-2025. Things to consider:

- Is this issue of paramount importance in Ohio 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?
- 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?

Unit Discussion Questions

1. **Reviewing the list of current LWV Ohio positions, are there any that should be dropped or need updating?** Don't take time to discuss each of the position statements on the long list. Give members a few minutes to review the list and an opportunity to bring up any positions of concern.
2. **Does the Unit recommend a new state study to develop a position not currently covered by local, state or national LWV positions?** A new state study is a major undertaking and the local League recommending it must be willing to gather support from Leagues around the state and invest significant member time in conducting the study.
3. **Should LWV remain dedicated to the Making Democracy Work issues as its legislative priority?** This includes: Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics, and Redistricting.
4. **Is there ONE additional position/issue that the Unit recommends as a priority for state LWV action in 2023-2025?**

LWV Ohio Position summaries

This link will take you to the complete LWVO positions ([Agenda for Action](#) publication)

Government

Constitution: Support a clear, flexible, organized, and internally consistent Constitution. Support specification that taxation is a General Assembly responsibility and that funding should be flexible. Support independence of judges, with preference for merit selection. Oppose term limits for the General Assembly.

Apportionment/Districting: Support an impartial districting process with opportunity for citizen participation. Support districts that are compact, contiguous, bounded by a non-intersecting line, and follow political boundaries as much as possible.

State Government Finance: Support taxation that is fair and equitable, provides adequate resources for government programs while allowing flexibility for financing future program changes, is understandable to the taxpayer and encourages compliance, and is easy to administer.

Ohio Primary Election System: Support open primary election systems that narrow the field of candidates for the general election and permit all registered voters, regardless of political party membership, to participate.

Social Policy

Primary and Secondary Education: Support the use of public funds only for public schools. Support an elected State Board of Education whose responsibility is policy making/planning. Support state education standards as a method of attaining a high- quality education. Support state funding for education that guarantees a realistic and equitable level of per- pupil expenditures, and support local school districts assuming a reasonable share of the financial burden.

Higher Education: Support funding by the state to ensure that all Ohio citizens have access to post-secondary education that provides general education and job preparation.

Support Department of Education, appointed by the Governor with confirmation by the Senate, to be a planning, coordinating board with broad policy-making powers.

Juvenile Justice: Support community-based, least restrictive placement; rights and humane treatment of children who are juvenile offenders; alternative educational services; gender-specific treatment programs; unbiased treatment regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, or socio-economic status; statewide uniform standards for dealing with juvenile records. Oppose holding children in adult jails.

Capital Punishment: Support abolition of the death penalty and a moratorium on use of the death penalty.

Human Trafficking: Support legislation to stop human forced labor and sex trafficking. Adult and child victims should be provided with services as needed. Aggressive enforcement of laws should include cooperation among agencies, strategies to reduce demand, training, and necessary funding.

Health Equity: Health inequities are differences in health status between different population groups that arise from social conditions where people are born, grow, live, work and age. In increasing health equity, the League supports: legislation requiring an assessment of all proposed legislation as to its impact on health inequities, prior to adoption; expansion of Medicaid;

policies and legislation that encourage investment in areas of concentrated poverty; policies and legislation that promote income stability; cooperation between state, county and local governments with non-profits; and investing in policies, legislation and programs that help break the cycle of poverty.

Armed School Personnel: League of Women Voters Ohio (LWVO) opposes the arming of school personnel under any circumstances. LWVO supports alternatives to arming school personnel to create a healthier and safer school environment; supports the consideration of research into the effects of arming school personnel in the total decision process used to arm school personnel; and supports the consideration of the effects on targeted students including students of color in this decision to arm school personnel. However, as Ohio legislation currently makes arming school personnel legal, LWVO supports the following regulations and considerations when arming school personnel: determining parameters; transparency; stakeholder views; funding & liability; storage; school personnel selection; and training.

Natural Resources

Water: Support policies and procedures that provide for joint, cooperative planning and administration along watershed lines and across political boundaries; stringent water quality standards accompanied by strong enforcement and means of implementation; and adequate state financing, including incentives to local governments and industries for expediting water pollution abatement.

Solid Waste: Support the philosophy that solid waste, from generation to ultimate disposal, must be purposefully and systematically controlled by all levels of government in order to provide efficient service, protect the environment, and achieve successful resource recovery. Support measures to forestall depletion of our natural resources and to recover nonrenewable resources.

Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste: Support state policies and programs that emphasize the following hazardous waste management options in order of priority: waste reduction, toxicity reduction, and waste elimination; waste separation and concentration; energy/material recovery; waste exchange; and chemical, biological, physical, and thermal treatment.

Land Use: Support both urban revitalization and farmland preservation and the curbing of urban sprawl. Support the role of the state in providing authority and incentives for local governments to plan regionally and to exercise innovative planning and regulatory techniques such as suggested in the full position. Support use of eminent domain as a last resort under conditions specified in the full position. Support an enforcement system for appeals or arbitration where conflicts exist.

Interbasin Transfer of Water: Support diversion of water only after study of the ecological, economic, and social implications indicate that diversion would be sustainable and only after the development of a plan to protect the affected areas during all stages of development, operation, termination, and post-termination. Support public participation in the decision-making process. Support participation of all concerned governments in Great Lakes resource decision-making.

Great Lakes Ecosystem: Support preserving and enhancing the environmental integrity and quality of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Ecosystem. Support the attainment and maintenance of high water quality standards throughout the Great Lakes Basin, with emphasis on water pollution prevention. Water conservation should be a high priority of all governments in the Basin.