
LWVDE Alternative Voting Study Team Consensus Report

April 24, 2021

Consensus Meetings

The LWVDE Alternative Voting Methods Study Team conducted three consensus meetings in April 2021 to ask the Delaware League membership, **“Should the League of Women Voters of Delaware adopt its own position on electoral systems? And should that position include support for one specific alternative voting method, ranked-choice voting?”**

One daytime, one evening, and one weekend meeting were scheduled, and all three were held by Zoom web conference. Invitations, background information and consensus questions were sent to all Delaware League members two weeks ahead, on April 5th, with a second invite/reminder email to all members on April 18th. The sessions, moderated by Study Chair Kim Wells, were as follows:

- **10 am on Tuesday 4/20/2021: 16 participants** (Chris Asay, Karen Barker, Linda Barnett, Judy Butler, Mary Ann Coe, Letty Diswood, Cecilia Guerrette, Joann Hasse, Joyce Johnson, Jane Lord, Tiffany Lydon, Pat Makos, Coralie Pryde, Martha Redmond, Rain Tyler, Jack Young)
- **6 pm on Wednesday, 4/21/2021: 6 participants** (Kristin Brownlee, Gloria Cooke, Jane Dilley, Jill Itzkowitz, Connie Jones, Keith Steck)
- **10 am on Saturday, 4/24/2021: 6 participants** (Penny Deiner, Marj Johnson, Alicia Jones, Joan March, Pat Newcomb, Michele Warch)

In all, we had 15 members from the New Castle County League, 2 from Kent County, and 11 from Sussex County in attendance. Five Study team members and six state Board members participated. When possible, we used breakout rooms with three to four people per room to be sure that all attendees could fully express their thoughts. We used the main meeting space to review the discussion from all rooms, and Zoom polling to make sure opinions were recorded accurately.

League members Nicole Cerqueira and Vicky Kleinman of New Castle County could not attend a meeting but provided their input by email.

Consensus Summary

Through the meetings and email responses, the membership reached consensus on the following points:

1. **LWVDE should have its own position on electoral systems.**
2. **Our position should incorporate the full LWVUS position.**
3. **We should add some Delaware-specific clauses of our own.**
4. **One of the Delaware-specific clauses should express support for ranked-choice voting (RCV).**

The proposed new position is shown in the next section of this document. Delaware-specific clauses are shown in ***bold italic*** text. In addition to those clauses, support was shown for two more bullet items that

we did not achieve consensus on: *[The League supports electoral methods that...]* “Are easy to use, understand, and administer” and *[...that...]* “Reduce the influence of money in elections”. Members in the Tuesday consensus meeting were split on the former and against the latter. Saturday’s group supported the ease-of-use clause and were split on the money one. Members in the Wednesday consensus meeting supported both. Since we came to different conclusions, consensus was not achieved, and those bullet points are not included in the Study team’s proposed new position provided below.

Proposed New LWVDE Consensus Position on Electoral Systems

Based on consensus meetings held with the membership in April 2021, the LWVDE Alternative Voting Study team recommends the following consensus position for adoption in Delaware:

Voter Representation/ Electoral Systems Position (Proposed for Board Approval)

Position in Brief:

Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters.

Position in Full:

LWVDE promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. We encourage electoral methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible and are expressive of voter choices.

Whether for single or multiple winner contests, the League supports electoral methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities
- Are **secure**, verifiable and auditable
- Promote access to voting
- Maximize effective votes/minimize wasted votes
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting
- **Discourage negative campaigning**
- Implement alternatives to plurality voting
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail

LWVDE believes in representative government. The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies—legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards—that proportionally reflect the people they

represent. We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g. gerrymandering).

The League supports the implementation of Ranked-Choice Voting in elections for representation at all levels of Delaware government, including school board, municipal, county, state and national, for both primary and general elections.

LWVDE supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative electoral methods, as well as supporting state election laws allowing for more options at both the state and local levels. With the adoption of any electoral system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be available. We encourage a concerted voter education process.

*(elements in **bold italic** text are Delaware additions to the LWVUS position)*