

California Local League Media Relations & Interview Guide

(Adapted from [LWVUS Media Relations Guidance](#))



PART 1: MEDIA INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS & PREPARATION

1. National vs. State vs. Local Interview Protocols

- **National Press:** If contacted by the national press, you **must** email communications@lww.org before accepting. LWVUS prioritizes media needs and will pause other work to help you prepare, coordinate nationwide messaging, and amplify coverage on social media.
- **State Issues:** If contacted by the press asking for LWV comments on statewide issues, you **must** refer the outlet to LWVC at communications@lwwc.org.
- **Local Press Requests:** Local Leagues may choose to manage local media directly, using the vetting and interview steps below. It is also perfectly acceptable to pass any media requests either to LWVUS or LWVC for their consideration. LWVUS and LWVC each have their own processes for determining which press invitations to accept.

2. Logistical Questions to Ask Before Agreeing

- **Deadline:** What date/time is the story due to the editor?
- **Focus & Angle:** What is the specific angle or topic? *(Never ask for exact questions in advance, but asking for topics ensures better preparation).*
- **Format & Length:** Is it print, digital, TV, or radio? If broadcast, is it **LIVE** or pre-recorded?

3. Vetting the Request

- Google the reporter and read their recent stories.
- Confirm whether the news outlet reaches a target audience of local voters.

- Evaluate if the opportunity expands visibility for core League priorities.

4. TV Interview Essentials

- **Logistics & Arrival:** Arrive early to use the green room and confirm parking/ID requirements.
- **Studio & Setup:** Ask if hair/makeup is provided, how you will be positioned (seated, desk, or standing), and ask where to look (at the host vs. directly into the camera lens).
- **Wardrobe:** Recommended: solid colors (avoid busy patterns) and a jacket/sweater to pull the look together. If available, League pin or button visible.
- **Panels:** If appearing with other guests, ask who they are in advance to anticipate points of agreement or disagreement.

5. On-the-Record & Delivery Rules

- **Assume Everything is On the Record:** Unless specific rules are established in advance, assume all remarks can be quoted with your name and League title.
- **Pacing & Soundbites:** Answer in full, conversational 15- to 30-second soundbites. Speak clearly and slowly on phone interviews to control your pacing.
- **Pre-Recorded Do-Overs:** It is completely fine to pause, take a deep breath, or say, *"Do you mind if I start over? I can state that point more clearly."* Reporters appreciate clean soundbites.
- **Use Listen-and-Repeat Clues:** Re-use key phrases from the reporter's question to deliver a direct, structured response.
- **Record Your Own Audio:** Keep a backup recording on your phone for self-review and reference.

6. The "ABC" Pivoting Framework

Use pivot phrases to steer stray or hyper-partisan questions back to the voter:

- *"What I'm really here to talk about is..."*
- *"I can't speak to that candidate/party, but what I can say is..."*
- *"What voters in California really need to know is..."*

PART 2: CALIFORNIA TALKING POINTS & CALLS TO ACTION

1. The 30-Second Elevator Pitch

"The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization that empowers voters and defends democracy. Powered by local Leagues across the country, we provide unbiased voting information, defend ballot access, and hold government accountable without ever endorsing or opposing political candidates or parties."

2. Promoting California Voter Resources

- **Ballot Measure Guidance:**
 - *"California ballot measures can be long and complex. The League provides unbiased, plain-language ballot explainers - including our Easy Voter Guide"*

and Pros & Cons explanations - so that voters can understand what's on their ballot. Find these resources and more at cavotes.org."

- *"Voters can also visit lwvc.org to see our official ballot recommendations, which we call **Vote with the League**."*

- **VOTE411 & Voting Tools:**

- *"For customized election details, local candidate responses, and polling location lookup, voters can use VOTE411.org."*
- *"Whether someone needs to find their polling place or compare candidates side-by-side, VOTE411.org gives voters a single place to make a confident plan to vote."*

3. California Voting Rights & Policy Priorities

- **Defending Ballot Access:**

- *"California leads the nation in vote-by-mail, early voting options, and expanding voter access. We strongly oppose efforts that would add any new barriers to voting, including strict voter ID requirements that rely on debunked fraud claims and disenfranchise vulnerable, eligible voters."*

- **Statewide Legislative Advocacy:**

- *"Our volunteer legislative analysts and LWVC staff work directly in Sacramento to track legislation, protect voting, advance campaign finance transparency, and protect government accountability."*

4. Closing Call to Action

Always wrap up your interview with a clear invitation:

"Democracy is not a spectator sport. Voters can get nonpartisan election resources at cavotes.org, and be a part of our work to defend democracy and empower voters across California at lwvc.org."

5. Post-Interview Follow-Up

- **Get Air/Publish Dates:** Ask when and where the story will go live online.
- **Connect & Tag:** Exchange contact info, follow the reporter on social media, tag them when sharing the article from your League's account, and add them to your ongoing press list.