



Legislative Interviews: Frequently Asked Questions

May we ask questions not on the list?

It's important to ask the questions on the list, particularly question 2: "What are your personal legislative priorities?". We are gathering information about what policy topics and efforts legislators want to prioritize. You have the option to ask a third question that may be used for a topic of your local League's choice.

What is the correct tone for the interview?

This is a listening session and an opportunity to build a relationship with the legislator. We recommend a conversational and polite tone. This is not advocacy. Simply by asking the questions provided, we are indicating to the legislator the areas of League concern and interest.

How do we report to members about the results of the interview?

If you plan to "publish" for wide distribution (such as your Voter or public website) we suggest asking the legislator to review for accuracy of statements, prior to publication. This is both a courtesy and helps to ensure accuracy. If you do not plan to publish, it is not necessary to take the additional step of prior review. Simply send your responses to LWVC where it is treated as "internal" information for League eyes only.

May we record the interview?

We don't recommend that you record the interview for various reasons:

1. Recording may inhibit the openness and frankness we hope to achieve about upcoming legislation and their willingness to speak candidly with the League.
2. One of the reasons for the interview is to develop a relationship with your legislator that could be tapped for lobbying in the future. Recording could inhibit that relationship development.
3. It is too easy for any "recording," especially one available and viewed online, to be edited and misused, or taken out of context by some unknown person online. Knowing this, a legislator may feel vulnerable to misuse and mischief – not necessarily by the League, but by someone who can access the video online. Further, as the Legislative Interview Toolkit suggests, you will have a designated note taker on the interview team to record information.



Why don't we send the legislator the questions ahead of time?

It is fine to provide the general nature of the question, but if you're planning to ask substantive local League questions, don't provide the specific question. This way, the responses will be more conversational, direct, and spontaneous instead of "filtered" or polished as a PR statement prepared in advance. We can learn if the legislator is educated about, interested in, and whether they see it as a priority or issue of importance. We can observe the legislator's ability to respond on-the-spot and see how much they know about the topic. For the same reason, we do not submit the background information in advance.

Can non-members of the League participate in the Interview?

Yes, particularly if it's someone you hope to engage in League and see as a member prospect. Make sure that the purpose of the interview as a learning experience is clearly understood. In particular, make clear that everyone at the interview is there to represent the League and not to raise either a particular personal issue or project, or a priority of another organization.

What happens if the legislator won't give us an interview?

Please let the LWVC know if this occurs. We may be able to help. Please let us know the reason behind not being able to do the interview. Is scheduling the problem? Or reluctance to speak to LWV?