



Appendix A:

Consensus and Concurrence

How to Use Consensus and Concurrence to Reach Member Agreement

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about various aspects of the policy issue. The nature of the issue will affect how it is studied and how positions are reached. The board usually selects the method to be used: consensus (where agreement is reached using League responses to specific questions) or concurrence (where agreement or a vote on a pre-stated position is required).

The technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement is consensus by group discussion. 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, whether in a meeting of the full membership or a series of smaller discussion meetings.

Regardless of the method used, it is essential that members have an opportunity to become informed before being asked to make decisions on the issue under consideration. It is through this process that League members become educated on a given issue, and this is what makes subsequent League action on that issue uniquely credible and respected. During the study phase, members have an opportunity to examine the facts and key pro/con points. They are encouraged to discuss the political realities of action and to contribute ideas for the board to consider when it formulates an action strategy after a position is reached. If the League has a position on a given issue, action can be taken as appropriate. The issue does not need to be studied each time action is thought to be necessary.

Formulating League Positions

A League's position reflects membership understanding and agreement on a particular public policy issue. In formulating a position, either prior to seeking member agreement through concurrence or following member agreement through consensus, the board must keep in mind the importance of wording the position in terms broad enough to enable the League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of specific legislative and executive proposals over a period of time.

Determining whether consensus has been achieved and how it should be expressed is the responsibility of the board. Through an interpretive process, the board first evaluates the reports of member views and then determines the broad areas of agreement and disagreement that emerge.

Once a League board has finalized a position on an issue, it is announced to members and can be shared with the public. It becomes part of the League's position statements, and the board can begin taking action on it immediately. Like all statements of position, it must be readopted each year by League members at the annual meeting (or biennial convention) in order to remain on the program of issues for possible action.

A local League's views during a regional, state or national study do not constitute a final League position and should not be publicized, either to members or to the public. In this case, each local board's responsibility is to report its members' areas of agreement and its level of member participation

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to the regional, state or national board. In turn, the appropriate board analyzes the member agreement reports from local Leagues, develops a position statement that reflects member thinking and announces the position to members and the public. That position is then available immediately to be used as the basis for action.

LWVNC Board of Directors have adopted the following policy for reference in considering concurrence proposals made in the program planning process for State Convention:

At LWVNC Convention, members may agree ("concur") with a statement or position held by another League as recommended by the LWVNC Board, a Local League Board or a State LAT committee. LWVNC will accept proposals for concurrence prior to each state convention according to the timeline for proposed program as stated in LWVNC bylaws, Article XIII. Proposals for concurrence are debatable but not amendable therefore the statement or position must be approved or rejected as written. If a concurrence is recommended by the State League Board it will need a majority vote to pass. If the concurrence is not recommended it will follow the procedure for other program items that are not recommended requiring a majority vote to consider the concurrence and a 2/3 majority vote to pass as stated in LWVNC bylaws, Article XIII.

*Resources for this section: [LEAGUE BASICS \(lwv.org\)](http://lwv.org), LWVNC minutes January 4, 2023**

**pending approval at this time*

