



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA

PO Box 8453, Columbia, SC, 29202, (803) 636-0431, www.lwvsc.org

STATE BOARD POLICIES

Updated January 2020

AMENDMENT PROCESS. These policies may be amended by a majority vote at any state board meeting provided that two weeks notice be given. If required notice is not provided, amendment requires approval by 2/3 of the Board members.

1. **NONPARTISAN POLICIES FOR STATE BOARD MEMBERS**

The LWVSC is a nonpartisan organization that does not support or promote the interests of any political party or candidate. Board members will refrain from activities that would cast doubt on the credibility of this central aspect of League identity.

A. Board members may attend fundraising events, sign petitions, and make campaign contributions. However, no active board member shall chair or lead fundraising, political campaigns, or party organizations.

B. Should a board member wish to run for partisan office elected by the general public or by political party membership, or accept appointment to such an office, the board member shall resign or take a leave of absence from the Board. In deciding whether it is more appropriate to resign or to take a leave of absence the board member should consider the length of time of the commitment and any other factors that would effect public perceptions of the League. Members on leave of absence because of involvement in a partisan campaign should not return to active service in the League until after the relevant election.

C. If a spouse or partner of a state board member runs for any partisan political office, this need not disqualify the state board member from a position of the board. This should be brought before the state board for review and decision.

D. Endorsement of any partisan candidate or party must be avoided by the president, voters service chair, and LWVSC authorized lobbyists.

E. Any question about the political activity of a state board member should be brought before the state board for review and a decision about the appropriate action.

2. MEDIA POLICY FOR STATE BOARD MEMBERS

A. In any public context in which the board member is identified with the League, the Board member shall not indicate her/his political affiliations or candidate preferences to the attending members of the public or to the media.

B. Board members who express their political convictions on social media are expected to do so responsibly. It must be clear that the statement represents only a personal opinion, not a statement on behalf of the League

3. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

A. **Board members are expected to**

1. Be familiar with (a) the LWVSC by-laws, nonpartisanship and other policies, the state Program, the state positions, and the LWVSC website; (b) the LWVUS website and national positions.

2. Attend board meetings, including teleconference meetings. In the event that absence is unavoidable, notify the President ahead of time and arrange to call in, if practicable.

3. Read and respond promptly to emails, texts, and other communications. Consider carefully whether the response should be to the sender (Reply) or to all participants on the address line (Reply All).

4. Know who the member's SC legislators are and be ready to call, email, or write them in support of LWV advocacy efforts.

B. **Board Briefings** (BBs) are due to the co-presidents and VP in charge of the area one week before each state board meeting if the board member plans to be absent from the meeting. BBs should include what is happening in the member's area of responsibility, a status report on his/her related activities, and recommendations for board action.

C. **Post-Board Reports** (PBRs), if needed, are due to the co-presidents and VP in charge of the area 10 days after each state board meeting. Post-Board reports are to summarize information and board action in the member's area of responsibility. PBRs may be sent by the president/co-presidents to local League leaders to communicate relevant information, decisions, upcoming events, etc., that were discussed at the state board meeting.

D. These “**State Board Policies**” shall be reviewed by the state board at the first board meeting following each biennial state council and convention, and may be revised at any time at the discretion of the state board.

E. At the board meeting after the biennial state convention, the newly elected board will decide if any “**Off Board Specialists**” will be asked to serve the board for the next two years. “Off Board Specialists” offer expertise, experience, and monitoring abilities to promote specific League program issues. They will report to the board member responsible for their portfolio or to the program vice-president. They have voice at board meetings but no vote. Their attendance at LWVSC board meetings is welcomed but not required.

F. Board Directors and Off-Board Specialists are responsible for monitoring the need for member action on their issues and initiating consideration of action in a timely manner, when there is appropriate opportunity to influence decision-making.

4. ACTION ALERT PROCEDURES:

The following guidelines cover the steps for sending LWVSC members a call for action on specific legislation or governmental policy.

A. LWVSC Board Directors and Off-Board Specialists wishing to send an action alert on an issue within their portfolio area should first email the proposed action alert for approval to the president, one of the co-presidents, and/or the VP/Issues and Action.

B. The person composing the action alert should include the following information in the form of an electronic MS Word file (PDFs will not be accepted):

1. The action requested, the issue, bill number, if any, and its status.
2. Which decision-makers members should contact.
3. Contact information for reaching officials by phone, postal and email. (Until LWVSC has an automated system in place to assist in this process, the person composing the action alert can use reference to an on-line resource, especially www.statehouse.gov).
4. The League position(s) supporting this action. The person composing the action alert should provide the source, quote, and page number of the LWV position(s) on which this call to action is based (e.g., LWVSC Agenda for Action; LWVUS Impact on Issues). The address (URL) of the supporting position on the Web would be helpful, but is not required.
5. A statement that presents background on the issue. In many cases, the person composing the action alert may have that statement available and can

include it in the request.

6. Talking points or a sample letter for members to use to communicate with their officials by phone, letter, or email.

7. Language encouraging citizens to communicate with officials in their own words, since officials often discount form letters.

8. Additional information about the issue and a link to the entire bill.

C. The person composing the action alert should then receive approval via email for the final version of the action alert from the president, one of the co-presidents, and/or the VP/Issues and Action.

D. The League officer approving the action alert (the president, one of the co-presidents, or the VP/Issues and Action) will email the action alert to the LWVSC Web Action Coordinator who will distribute the document to LWVSC members using the current statewide member roster that she/he downloads from the LWVUS online system.

E. Members can opt out of receiving action alerts.

5. STUDY AND CONSENSUS

Studies will be proposed to LWVSC Council or Convention with justification in terms of a specific need for new or amended position statements for advocacy and lobbying. The state council or convention will decide the feasibility of a state study, approve it, name it, and identify its chair. The chair will form a committee that will develop consensus questions and study materials to be approved by the state board, and work with local boards on their participation in consensus. The state board will review consensus reports from local leagues and formulate a new or revised position to present to state council or convention for approval. Studies should be initiated and completed within the biennium between the meetings of the LWVSC Council or Convention.

6. COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE:

Copies of significant correspondence relating to League policy or positions should be sent to the president or co-presidents. This applies to correspondence among state board members, between state and local boards, and between state and national board and staff.

7. DELEGATES:

A. The president or co-presidents shall be delegate(s) to national councils and conventions; other delegates shall be named by the rest of the state board.

B. Board members cannot double as local League or MAL unit delegates at state League conventions and councils.

C. The president/co-presidents, at her/his discretion, may represent the League at meetings of other organizations when it is not feasible to consult with the board ahead of time.

8. FINANCE:

A. The treasurer is authorized to pay routine expenses as provided for in the state budget. Travel is reimbursed at the per mile rate set by the state board

B. Reimbursement request forms are available from the LWVSC treasurer. A reimbursement request should be submitted to the treasurer as soon as possible after the reimbursable cost is incurred.

C. Member-at-large (MAL) dues for voting, associate, and student members will be determined through the budget process. MALs whose dues are more than two months overdue will be dropped.

D. The state board will provide the budget committee with proposed dues for MALs and an estimate of income and expenses relating to MALs.

E. The board member registration fee for state conventions or councils is covered in the budget.

F. The Carre Fund is considered to be a reserve fund for the LWVSC. It is to be maintained in one or more interest-bearing accounts with the accrued interest transferred to the current year's budget. The state board may authorize use of the principal for cash-flow purposes or borrow funds for special projects. Withdrawals from the Carre Fund should be restored as soon as possible.

G. A loan from the state board treasury may be made to a local League in a situation of urgent need. Such a loan must be approved by a majority of the state board and requires a clearly written procedure for repayment. A reasonable rate of interest may be assessed by the state board.

H. Expenditures approved by the budget will be implemented by the treasurer; non-budgeted expenditures will be approved by the board before the treasurer makes payment. The president and treasurer may make budget adjustments by transferring funds across categories as needed and inform the board of such changes at the next board meeting.

I. The treasurer will sign all checks. The president/co-presidents are also authorized to sign in case the treasurer is incapacitated or otherwise unavailable.

J. The treasurer will receive cash and make authorized payments recording check numbers in a computerized itemized record. This will be reflected in the board financial report.

K. A bi-monthly report of transactions over \$1,500 will be sent to the executive committee for review.

L. Blank checks will be held only by the treasurer and any other authorized signer(s), with expenditures recorded by check number and amount in the monthly and bimonthly reports.

M. The board will designate a person to pick up mail and forward checks to the treasurer.

N. In accordance with the LWVSC bylaws, the board will appoint a budget committee made up of one off-board member, one member of the state board, and an off-board chair appointed by the state board. The treasurer shall be, ex officio, a member of the budget committee. The committee shall submit a proposed budget for state board approval at least six weeks before the convention or council.

O. The board will designate a financial review committee composed of two off-board members to review LWVSC financial records each biennium. Every effort should be made to enlist at least one member with experience in financial management.

P. The board's responsibilities, in brief, are to recommend adoption of a detailed budget, review and understand the treasurer's statements, make sure that bills are being paid on time, approve unbudgeted expenses, provide for a biennial review, and ask questions.

9. FINANCIAL SOLICITATION:

When the LWVSC solicits for donations from businesses, corporations, organizations, and individual nonmember donors, contributions from names suggested to LWVSC by a local league will be allocated as follows: the local league shall receive 40% of unrestricted donations to the LWVSC; MAL units will receive 40% of unrestricted contributions up to a maximum of \$400. Donations restricted by the donor for LWVSC use or for a specific project shall not be shared.

10. COALITIONS:

A coalition, as defined by the dictionary, is a collaboration for a common purpose. The League on all levels often joins coalitions for the accomplishment of limited goals. We are encouraged to do so by LWVUS. The primary caveat is the need for strict nonpartisanship. Each such opportunity should be examined on its own merits, our member-determined priorities, and the demand on our limited resources. The following are guiding principles to be used when the state board is asked to join a coalition:

- A. The coalition is nonpartisan.
- B. The coalition has a well-defined and focused objective, such as passage or defeat of particular bill.
- C. The coalition's goals are compatible with our positions and priorities at both national and state levels.
- D. The partnership has an appropriate organizational structure.
- E. Resources such as volunteer time, board time, and finances are available without diverting resources from our identified priorities.
- F. Our integrity as an organization will be preserved.
- G. We will have control over public announcements.

11. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER:

The membership roster may not be made available for non-League use without the permission of the president or his/her designees.

12. PUBLICITY:

A. All public statements, including official letters, are made in the name of the president or her/his designee and only with her/his knowledge and approval. No publicity material should be released until approved by the president. Action Alerts from LWVUS are exceptions.

B. Copies of all news releases and formal statements made at press conferences, public hearings, or before legislative committees, should be sent to local League presidents and MAL unit chairs.

13. RESIGNATIONS:

Resignations from the board shall be given at a regular board meeting by the member resigning, or shall be submitted in writing. Three consecutive unexcused absences shall be considered a resignation. Members must notify the president if unable to attend a board meeting.

14. STANDARDS FOR LOCAL LEAGUES:

LWVSC is responsible for the formation and recognition of new local Leagues in the state of South Carolina; the ongoing monitoring of all local League activities to assure that local

Leagues are functioning according to national and state League standards; and, if needed, the dissolution or merging of a League ceasing operations. To this end:

A. To gain and retain recognition, local Leagues must meet the standards set by LWVUS, including strict adherence to our nonpartisanship policy by all who publicly represent and/or speak for the League.

B. In South Carolina, a group seeking recognition must have a paid up membership of 20 and must show evidence of the ability to carry out League responsibilities as an autonomous group.

C. Once recognized, a local League, in order to be considered in good standing, must carry out the following fiduciary and governance responsibilities:

1. Fiduciary

- Provide to LWVSC a copy of its budget and its prior fiscal year's financial statement within two months after the close of every fiscal year.
- Maintain its non-profit exempt status with the IRS by annually filing Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N (e-postcard) by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of its fiscal year.
- Submit the Annual Application for Registration Exemption with the SC Secretary of State four and one-half months after the close of every fiscal year.
- Pay to LWVSC its annual Per Member Payments on a timely quarterly or annual basis.

2. Governance

- Provide to LWVSC a copy of its bylaws and any subsequent amended versions within two months after any change.
- Provide to LWVSC a list of its officers and directors and their contact information by August 15 of every year.
- Review and obtain board sign-offs on its nonpartisanship policy annually.
- Provide an annual report of activities and statement of membership for publication at biennial state council meetings and state conventions.

D. A local League not fulfilling these requirements will first receive a warning of non-compliance. LWVSC will make every effort to assist local Leagues when non-compliance is related to neglect or poor management, not illegal activity. However, if remedial action is not taken within a reasonable time, the local League may be denied representation at state

meetings and conventions until standards are met. Persistent failure to meet these standards may result in the LWVSC's Board of Directors recommending dissolution of the local League to the LWVUS Board of Directors.

15. STANDARDS AND SUPPORTS FOR MAL UNITS:

A. Chairs, presidents, conveners, and/or voter services directors of Member-At-Large (MAL) Units may not participate in any political activities relating to an elective office or political party. Other leaders may be restricted by the state board.

B. A MAL Unit must maintain a minimum membership of eight, have three officers, carry out at least one activity or meeting each quarter, and submit quarterly reports to the state board.

C. Dues are \$50 to the Unit of which \$38 goes to LWVSC, which will pay the national PMP. The local unit may charge a minimal fee for student members up to age 21. First year dues will be retained by the Unit unless the timing of their formation results in a national PMP obligation. MAL units will follow the LWVSC fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

D. MAL Units are encouraged to participate in the consensus process on state and national studies, may take local action based on state and national positions following study of the issue and with state board approval, and are encouraged to respond to state and national Action Alerts. Units may not develop a consensus or take action on a local issue except with special permission of the state board.

E. LWVSC supports MAL Units by offering a start-up fund, leadership tools, information on Board actions, recommendations from a designated liaison, and payment of national PMP. Each voting member also receives the *SC Voter* and other communications to members.

F. An advisor for each MAL Unit is appointed by the state board to guide and oversee the Unit's activities.

G. In addition to the above, MAL Units are subject to the provisions of the LWVSC bylaws, the LWVSC nonpartisanship and diversity policies, and other LWVSC policies.

16. SUPPORTS FOR ISOLATED MALS (MALS NOT IN UNITS):

A. The state League services isolated MALS by sending them state Post Board Reports, all state League publications, national publications on issues being studied, and other appropriate material within the constraints of the budget. LWVSC pays their national PMP.

B. Isolated MALs may participate in the consensus process for state and national League studies, and may respond to state and national Action Alerts.

C. Isolated MALs are subject to the provisions of the state League bylaws and other sections of these policies.

17. SC VOTER:

A. No more than one item from any one person other than members of the state board will be published in a given SC VOTER.

B. Letters to the SC VOTER editor will be limited to 200 words. No more than four will be published in a given issue of the SC VOTER and no more than two on one side of a given topic.

C. The SC VOTER editor in concert with the state League president/co-presidents has the authority to edit material. As necessary, the editor will alert the president of a submission which needs their joint review and decision as to publication.

18. VOTERS SERVICE:

A. The following statement shall be sent with questionnaires and included with material for publication: “News media will be expected to preserve the accuracy and completeness of League candidates’ questionnaires and replies thereto.”

B. Candidate forums involving candidates for statewide offices require state board approval.

C. Candidate questionnaires must be sent to all candidates certified by the appropriate election commission for the office being covered and shall not be sent to any write-in candidates.

19. LOCAL LEAGUE INPUT REGARDING STATE LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Local Leagues have an opportunity for input regarding LWVSC lobbying work in the Statehouse through use of the “State Legislative Action Request Form,” available on the LWVSC website. A local League board is welcome to submit this form if there is a legislative action, based on a LWVUS and/or LWVSC position, that it is particularly interested in furthering. The request will be reviewed by a board-designated subcommittee, including the LWVSC lobbyist, and a determination made as to the possibility of accommodating the request without detriment to the LWVSC focused lobbying activity for that legislative session.