

PROGRAM PLANNING FOR 2015 LWVNYS CONVENTION

Preparing for State Convention 2015

Included in this email are directions to all leagues on developing a Program, i.e. any new issues selected for concentrated study, which positions need to be updated, and which existing positions are maintained for possible action, for 2015-2017. "Program" really means positions, so this is the time to determine which positions we want to keep, delete, update/revise or even consider new studies for new positions. We hope you will review our present program and recommend any changes through the process noted in these guidelines.

Results of the two studies considered this year by all local Leagues, on term limits and ballot access, will be announced at the Convention after all results have been collated and the board has accepted the results. Similarly, the results of the update on the position on Constitutional Convention delegate selection will be announced at Convention also. These positions or changes are not included in the current LWVNYS Impact on Issues.

Grassroots and League "Program"

In a grassroots organization, it is vital that all members have the opportunity to participate. The League "Program" is determined by members and consists of federal, state and local issues. National issues are adopted at LWVUS Convention, state issues at LWVNYS Convention and local issues at local Leagues' annual meetings. Please share the information in this report with your members and encourage member participation in the making of the LWVNYS 2015-2017 Program. This process provides every member an opportunity to influence new areas of study and the issues that will direct League action during the 2015-2017 League years.

CALENDAR FOR DEVELOPING LWVNYS 2015-2017 PROGRAM

December – February

Local Leagues review LWVNYS Summary of Public Policy Positions (and the underlying complete position in LWVNYS *Impact on Issues*) and discuss possible revisions and additions at a general membership meeting. Revisions and additions would be done through dropping positions, updating positions, or new studies. Local League boards, using the outcome of the general membership meeting, forward their recommendations on the attached form to the state League by February 20, 2015. **This is the only method for suggesting new studies to be adopted at Convention 2015 and the February 20 deadline for submission must be met. Changes in Program cannot be suggested for the first time at Convention.**

March

State Board reviews recommendations from local Leagues and develops a Proposed Program for consideration by delegates to State Convention.

April

Proposed Program is sent to local Leagues in Pre Convention Kit. It includes recommended and non-recommended program items, submitted by the February 20, 2015 deadline. Local Leagues review the Proposed Program. They may decide, early on, to establish a League network to rally support for certain items on the recommended or non-recommended lists.

June

Convention delegates adopt a 2015-2017 Program either as proposed by the state League board or as amended by the inclusion of non-recommended items.

GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL LEAGUE PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF LWVNYS 2015-2017 PROGRAM

1. Hold a general membership meeting to provide an opportunity for grassroots input. The meeting should be chaired by a local League board member with experience related to the state issues. The chair will find the following references valuable in her/his efforts to guide the discussion: LWVNYS, *Impact on Issue (on state League website under Advocacy areas)*, LWVUS, *Impact on Issues*, LWVNYS, *In League In New York State: A Guide To Managing Local Leagues* Section 8, Pages 153-180, LWVNYS Summary of Public Policy Positions 2011-2013(attached). LWVNYS *Impact on Issues* has been updated as of the end of the 2014 legislative session in June, 2014. Information on many areas of our positions can also be found on the specific issue pages on the advocacy page of our website. **If you have any questions, please call or e-mail the state office.**
2. Use the following guidelines to successfully develop recommendations for the 2015-2017 program:
 - a. Review LWVNYS Summary of Public Policy Positions 2011-2013 and the underlying complete positions to recommend which positions should be retained, dropped, or updated. The following definitions should be used to guide these decisions.
 - i. Retain - Members are committed to the position and will actively be involved in supporting LWVNYS efforts to pursue position's goals.
 - ii. Drop - Position is no longer useful in its present form or is not supported by members. Action on this position will end. Any future action will require adoption of a new study.
 - iii. Update - A study of limited scope to reevaluate a position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another position. The aim is to consider position changes.
 - iv. **The Summary of Public Policy Positions is merely a convenient way to access our full positions. Amendments to the wording for editorial purposes, clarification or emphasis may be made but may not change the scope of meaning of the underlying position as currently applied by the Board. It is recommended that such amendments be given as Direction to the Board.**
 - b. Please consider the following:
 - i. Have our goals been reached or is further action needed?
 - ii. Is there need for monitoring?
 - iii. Is member interest and understanding sufficient to continue the inclusion of this position.
 - c. Before proposing a new study, review *LWVUS Impact on Issues* to be certain we have no national position on which to base action. Note that many of our positions in LWVNYS Summary of Public Policy Positions, are based on national positions.
 - d. When considering an issue for study, answer the following questions:
 - i. Would a study of this issue result in a position that could be used to influence legislative action or state government policy?
 - ii. Is there sufficient member interest in this issue, locally and statewide?
 - iii. Can the League make a unique contribution by adopting this issue as a program item?

- iv. Is there leadership at the local and state League level to conduct a statewide study that would result in a valid consensus?
- v. If a valid consensus is achieved and a position on the issue developed, do we have the local and state human and financial resources to work toward achieving the goal(s) of the position.

The guidelines cited above are not meant to discourage the recommendation of new studies but rather to encourage careful consideration. The League is a grassroots organization with tremendous credibility, due in large part to its reputation for conducting valid studies resulting in positions that represent our grassroots. As times change, the League must change but change should not result in a loss of quality. It is also imperative that we remember that studies increase visibility and that when visibility is in the positive vein it should increase membership. So, if your local League, after answering the above-cited questions, decides to recommend a study, your state board will review it thoroughly and consider its impact on all fronts.