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**THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS**
of New York State

**Consensus Questions
Government Consolidation/Shared Services State Study
January 26, 2010**

SECTION I

Standards for Judging State Legislation or Constitutional Amendments

What standards should the League apply when evaluating statewide legislation or constitutional amendments concerning the implementation of local government dissolution/consolidation/major shared service proposals (answer affirmatively all that you would support):

A. Does the legislation or constitutional amendment encourage a process that [is]:

1. Cooperative and collaborative?: Y___ N___ U___

2. Transparent?: Y___ N___ U___

3. Contain well defined channels for citizen input and review?: Y___ N___ U___

4. Provide affected citizens with sufficient and timely information necessary to make informed decisions?:

Y___ N___ U___

5. Other?: (add any additional process standards you support)

B. Does the legislation or constitutional amendment contain operational standards that, taken as a whole:

1. Promote administrative efficiency in the decision/process to dissolve, consolidate, or share services: Y___ N___ U___

2. Promote fiscal efficiency in the decision/process to dissolve, consolidate, or share services: Y___ N___ U___

3. **Other minimum operational standards we should support when evaluating state legislation/amendments affecting dissolution/consolidation/major shares services proposals. Attach separate page if necessary.**

C. Possible State Funding of Government

Dissolution/Consolidation/Shared Services (answer unsure if you do not have an opinion):

1. **Should the state provide grants or loans to local governmental units that wish to consider dissolution/consolidation/major shared services to enable them to do all or any of the items specified below? Y___ N___ U___**
2. **Specifically, should the grants or loans be available to:**
- a. **Conduct a feasibility study: Y___ N___ U___**
 - b. **Implement the mechanics of dissolution/consolidation/major shared services(e.g. legal, accounting, consulting fees and costs of referenda(if any)) : Y___ N___ U___**
 - c. **Pay employee expenses related to the integration of staff, early retirement, buyouts: Y___ N___ U___**
 - d. **Provide an incentive (thru municipal aid) to dissolve/consolidate/share services: Y___ N___ U___**
 - e. **Other? (Please list any other costs of consolidation/dissolution/shared service, if any, that you believe should be funded by state grants, in whole or in part)**
3. **Should the aid consist primarily of:**
- a. **Grants or ___**
 - b. **Loans? ___**
4. **Should grants, if any, cover 100% of the costs, be limited to matching grants (ie 50%), be limited to some other percentage, or you are unsure? (please indicate the consensus, if any)**

SECTION 2

Standards for evaluating a specific local proposal for the dissolution or consolidation of a local governmental entity (county, city, town, village, district, authority) or major shared service.

Answer affirmatively all that you would support as one of multiple standards for evaluation of a proposal, not necessarily as a prerequisite for supporting a proposal.

A. Is the process with respect to the proposal:

1. Cooperative and collaborative?: Y___ N___ U___
2. Transparent?: Y___ N___ U___
3. Containing well defined channels for citizen input and review?: Y___ N___ U___
4. Providing affected citizens with sufficient and timely information necessary to make informed decisions?:
Y___ N___ U___
5. Other?: (add any additional standards you support)

B. Operational standards in deciding whether to support a proposal (vote for as many as you feel should apply) :

Costs/Tax Impacts

Whether or not the proposal:

1. Results in overall cost savings/positive effect on taxes in the short term?: Y___ N___ U___
2. Results in projected cost savings/positive effect on taxes over the long term? : Y___ N___ U___
3. Results in cost savings/positive effect on taxes for citizens of both/all entities? : Y___ N___ U___

If cost savings for all are not possible for both/all:

- 4. Results in the governmental entity(s) with higher projected costs/taxes having those costs/taxes phased in over time or otherwise mitigated?: Y___ N___ U___**

- 5. Relies on increases in state aid to show an economic benefit from the transaction or does it stand on its own merit?:
Y___ N___ U___**

- 6. Requires any governmental entity affected by higher costs/taxes to accept such increased costs/taxes by means of a majority vote of the governing board? Y___ N___ U___**

Impact on Service Standards:

Whether or not the proposal:

- 7. Results in increased quality and/or efficiency of services?:**

Y___ N___ U___

- 8. Results in, at a minimum, a maintenance of services?:**

Y___ N___ U___

- 9. Results in diminution of services but ones that could be purchased more cheaply in the private sector?:**

Y___ N___ U___

- 10. Requires any governmental entity to accept any plan where residents would see a diminution of services by means of a majority vote of the governing board? Y___ N___ U___**

Other Items to be evaluated

Whether or not the proposal:

- 11. Fairly addresses disparities in employee contracts?:**

Y___ N___ U___

- 12. Results in increased social/economic justice? :**

Y___ N___ U___

13. **Results in a reduction in the number of governmental entities?:**

Y___ N___ U___

14. **Maintains sense of community?:** Y___ N___ U___

C. Other? (list on back) (any other areas of inquiry that you believe should be evaluated in any study of a dissolution/consolidation/major shared service proposal)

Thank all participants for their time and attention on this complicated topic. Encourage them to visit the LWVNYS website for additional material to help them to continue to advocate for more efficient, more representative government in their local area.

All responses must be mailed to the state League office (62 Grand St, Albany, NY 12207) and received by June 1, 2010, to be included in the consensus.