

# Let's Take Action: How, When and Why?

2022 Regional Training Workshops



# Nonpartisan and Political

From LWVUS CEO, Virginia Kase Solomon

*The League's advocacy work is issued based, and we arrive at our positions based on careful study and input from our members in communities across the country. We never derive our positions from politicians, and even when candidates or parties support the same issue, we never endorse them.*

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

# League Advocacy



League advocacy is based on member study and agreement on selected issues and involves concerted efforts to achieve public policies consistent with League positions. League lobbying promotes or opposes specific pieces of legislation.

The process used in formulating positions and in taking action at the grassroots level makes the League unique and sets the League apart from other organizations. The fact that we are members not only of a local League, but of a state League and of the League of Women Voters of the United States as well, makes us a powerful force.

# Advocacy versus Lobbying

Advocacy is a broader concept than lobbying. While lobbying can be part of an advocacy strategy, advocacy does not necessarily include lobbying.

## Lobbying

- attempt to influence specific legislation
- action that transmits a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs
- action urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation.

## Advocacy

- discussion on issues
- no call to action on a particular piece of legislation
  - developing public policy briefs that analyze issues
  - providing forums for discussing issues and educating policymakers and the public

# League Program Process



The program process is specified in bylaws and includes the following steps:

- Formal adoption (by members at an annual meeting or by state/national convention delegates) of an issue for study.
- Member study and agreement on broad concepts.
- Formulation of a position by the appropriate board of directors.
- Action as directed by the board of directors.
- Annual or biennial re-adoption of the position.

LWVNYS has recently revised its program process to allow for studies and concurrences to be initiated between state conventions. For more info, contact state staff.

Local Leagues may work simultaneously on local, state, national and (if applicable) regional program issues, but action may be taken only in those areas where there is member understanding and agreement.

# Speaking with One Voice

“Speaking with one voice” is one of the most important tenets of the League.

## LWVUS

- responsible for determining strategies and action policies that ensure that the League’s message on national issues is consistent throughout the country

## LWVNYS

- responsible for a consistent state message
- Local Leagues must ask permission of state League to advocate on state issues to ensure consistent message by local and state League

## Local Leagues

- cooperate to ensure that regional issues are addressed in a consistent matter by neighboring Leagues
- Only president (or designee) is permitted to speak for the League in an official capacity  
members take action on League topics as individuals

# Taking Action as an Individual



League members should be encouraged as individuals to contact their legislators regarding League priority issues.

Members are always free to take action on any topic, as long as it is clear that they are speaking as individuals, **not for the League** (i.e, they should not mention that they are League members in their communications).

It is important to remember that **only** the League president (or designee) speaks in the name of the League

# Taking Action in Your Community

Local League boards are responsible for interpreting their own positions before taking action.

A local League contemplating action on a community issue should consider the following:

- Does the League have a position that supports the proposed action? Can use state or national positions for local action, too.
- Do members understand and would they agree with the proposed action?
- Is it a priority for the League?
- Does the League have a unique role to play or would the League's assets (time and money) be better spent on other activities?
- Does it have some chance of success or make an important statement for the League?
- Are other organizations or a coalition already working on the issue?
- What action techniques would be most effective?
- How will the League deal with controversy?
- How can members be involved in the proposed action?
- What kind of community involvement would best support the League's efforts?



# Local League Action



## ACTION NOT REQUIRING CONSULTATION

1. Any action taken in response to an action request from the state or national League does not require any consultations. As they say just do it and thanks. These requests can be the form of Calls to Action or Action Alerts from state or national, or in the Voter articles, and State Board Updates.
2. Legislation on which the state League has already taken action, for example submitted Memos of Support to legislators, letter to legislative leaders or press conferences.

# Local League Action

## ACTION REQUIRING CONSULTATION

1. Action by a Local League at the Local Level – The decision to take action that will affect only your community rests with your local board.
2. Action that would affect more than one League requires consultation with the boards of the other League in the area involved.
3. Action that would involve contact with state government officials (senators, assembly, the governor, etc.) where no action has been requested and no state action has been taken (bill is not on the bill summary sheet) requires consultation with the state issues committee or the state Issues and Advocacy Vice President.
4. Action that would involve contact with government official at the national level where no action has been requested by LWVUS requires consultation with the National office.

No League may take action in opposition to a national or state League position. If your League disagrees with a position statement, the League must remain silent.

# Local League Action



## National Level Action

All action at the federal level must be authorized by the LWVUS office. This includes any effort aimed at influencing a decision on a federal issue, such as communicating with an elected or appointed official, joining a coalition, taking part in a press conference or rally, writing a letter-to-the-editor, or signing with a legal partner using the LWV brand.

There is a form to be completed requesting to take action at:

<https://www.lwv.org/federal-action-request-form>

# NYS Executive and Legislative Calendar

## Budget Process

Early January: Governor presents State of State

Mid-late January: Governor presents proposed state budget

Late Jan – early Feb: Legislature holds 13 joint (Assembly and Senate) budget hearings

Late Feb: Governor issues 30 day amendments to budget

Early March: Each house releases its one-house budget

Late March: Governor, Speaker, Senate Majority Leader negotiated budget behind closed doors

April 1: Budget deadline and beginning of new fiscal year

# NYS Executive and Legislative Calendar (con't)

## Legislative Calendar

First day of session: early January

Late Jan – early Feb: Joint Budget Hearings

Starting in January: Committee meetings and Legislative Sessions start but slower until budget passes

Late Feb: Legislative recess (1 week)

April 7-22: Legislative recess (2 weeks)

Late April: Most stand alone bills (unrelated to budget) considered in committees and on floors during session

June 2: Legislature adjourns for session

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# State Advocacy Calendar



## Legislative Agenda

- Mid-January

## Legislative Priorities

- By Feb. 1

## Pre Budget Lobby Packet

- Mid-February

## Post Budget Lobby Packet

- Mid-April

## Advocacy Day

- Late April/Early May

# When State League Takes Action

## How state League takes action

- Sends Memos of Support or Opposition
- Writes letters to legislators or legislative leaders
- Writes letters to Governor
- Lobbies legislators at the Capitol
- Issues Press Releases or holds Press Conference
- Issues an Action Alert for members to call legislators or Governor
  - Asks members to call, write or email

## When state League takes action

- Bill is on Committee Agenda (usually find out on Friday of week before)
  - Sends to appropriate Committee members
- Bill is on calendar for Assembly or Senate session
  - Sends to full Assembly or Senate

**State League does NOT take action just because a bill has been introduced**



# Resources

## State Resources

- LWVNYS Website: [lwvny.org](http://lwvny.org)
- Legislative Agenda: [https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LegislativeAgenda\\_WEB2022.pdf](https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LegislativeAgenda_WEB2022.pdf)
- LWVNYS Impact on Issues: <https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Impact-on-Issues-2021.pdf>
- Current Legislative Action (letters, Memos, etc): <https://lwvny.org/legislative-action/>
- NYS Legislative Session Calendar: [https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/sessioncalendar\\_2022.pdf](https://lwvny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/sessioncalendar_2022.pdf)

## LWVUS Resources

- LWVUS Website: [lww.org](http://lww.org)
- LWVUS Impact on Issues: <https://www.lww.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/LWV-impact-2020.pdf>