

LEAGUE 101

Everything you wanted to know about the League ... but were afraid to ask

About the League

- History
- Mission
- Principles
- Structure
- Voter service activities
- Program development and League positions
- Action/Advocacy
- Financing

Our History



Carrie Chapman Catt

A RICH HISTORY

- LWWUS - founded in 1920
- LWWOR - founded in 1924
- 1300 members statewide.
- 14 local Leagues and 2 MAL Units.
- Marge Easley, President;
- Jane Gigler, Chair of the Education Fund.

Our Mission



Our Mission defines what we are about

The League of Women Voters, a **nonpartisan political** organization, **encourages** informed and active participation in government, **works** to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and **influences** public policy through **education** and **advocacy**

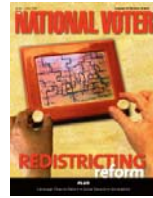
Our nonpartisan policy is key to our reputation

- neither supports nor opposes candidates for office
- However
 - Members are encouraged to participate in the party of their choice (as long as they don't claim to represent the League)
 - LWVOR Board member political activity is more limited



While our nonpartisan reputation is important to us, LWV is also political

- LWVOR takes positions and lobbies on selected governmental issues after members have studied the issues and reached consensus.

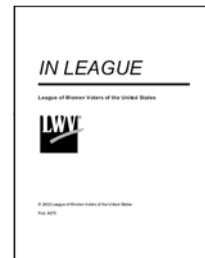


Our Principles



League principles – based on fundamental beliefs about government

1. The League of Women Voters believes in **representative government** and in the **individual liberties** established in the Constitution of the United States.



Fundamental beliefs

2. The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon

a. informed and active participation of its citizens and

b. protection of the citizens' right to know,

Fundamental beliefs

3. The League of Women Voters believes that

a. every citizen's **right to vote** should be protected

b. every person should have access to **free public education** that provides equal opportunity for all; and

c. **no** person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative **discrimination**.

Fundamental beliefs

4. The League of Women Voters believes that **efficient and economical government** requires
- a. competent personnel,
 - b. clear assignment of responsibility,
 - c. adequate financing and
 - d. coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

Fundamental beliefs

5. The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be **responsive to the will of the people** and should
- a) maintain an equitable, flexible, tax system,
 - b) promote conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest,
 - c) share in solving economic and social problems that affect the general welfare,
 - d) promote a sound economy and
 - e) adopt domestic policies that facilitate solutions of international problems.

Fundamental beliefs

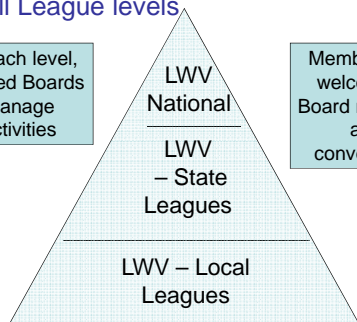
6. The League of Women Voters believes that
- a. **cooperation with other nations** is essential to solving world problems, and
 - a. support for the United Nations **and international law** are imperative in the promotion of world peace.

Structure



The League is a *grassroots* organization. Members determine policies and program for all League levels.

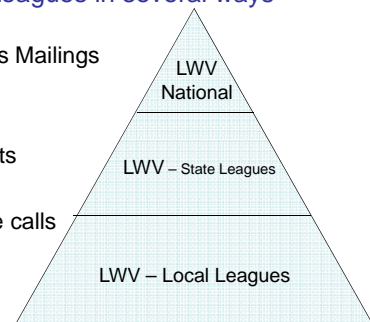
At each level, elected Boards manage activities



Members are welcome at Board meetings and conventions

Local Leagues interact with the National and State Leagues in several ways

- President's Mailings
- Websites
- Listserves
- Consultants
- Email
- Telephone calls



To ensure League “speaks with one voice,” only League presidents may speak for their Leagues



Elisabeth Macnamara
LWV-US



Marge Easley
LWVOR

In _____ (Local League), we have a strong Board and a growing League

Board Officers

- President --
- 1st Vice President --
- Secretary --
- Treasurer --

Directors

Membership as of 00/00/10 = ____

The League is committed to diversity

LWV diversity policy allows **no barriers to participation** on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, national origin or disability



Membership is open to all

- **Voting** membership is open to any **citizen** at least 18 years old living in the U.S.



- Anyone joining League **automatically** becomes a member of the local, state & national organizations

Unbeknownst to many, we WELCOME male members



There are many types of League meetings



General Meetings are membership meetings of local Leagues that are open to the public

- a topic of interest to the broader community
- encourage informed and active participation in government through education



LWVOR Office in Salem

Both daytime and evening programs are held to encourage community outreach

- Open to the public
- Free of charge (donations encouraged)



Lively League meetings usually address some form of League business



- Annual Meeting
- Visits by League officials
- League studies
- Consensus sessions
- Guest speakers

Committee meetings encourage participation in areas of specific interest

- Committee programs seek **balance** between **education** and **action/advocacy**
- Educational activities are ideally linked to advocacy/ action efforts

Hot Topics meetings are held on an ad-hoc basis about current issues of interest

Can include:

- State League Legislative Priorities
- Current studies

Upcoming:

- Primary and Fall Elections
- Ballot measures



Recent publications are available at www.lwv.org

State Level Meetings are great opportunities to meet like-minded people

- Legislative Workshop
- Fall Workshop
- Convention (odd years)
- Council (even years)



Oregon State Capitol
Salem

National meetings - bring together delegates from all over the country

- Convention (even years)
- Council (odd years)



Oregon Delegation
Portland - 2008

All meetings are publicized well in advance to maximize participation

- On www.lwvor.org and _____ (local League)
- In state and local LWV newsletters: The Voter
- In local newspapers



Our Voter Service Activities



Voter service (EDUCATION) activities

- build awareness of public issues and help voters make independent decisions, based on facts
- are **distinct and separate** from the League's **action agenda**,
- do not take sides on issues.
- can be funded by **tax-deductible** contributions.



Our voter service activities notify communities of important voting information:

- Voters' Guide
- Voter Registration
- Candidate forums
- Ballot measure forums presenting pros and cons
- Information available on our website (www.lwvor.org, www.vote411.org, www.VoteSource.org)

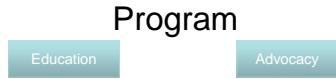


How We Decide on Our Program and League Positions



League Program =
Action Agenda based on League Positions

- Program is the bridge from education to advocacy



While program is action-oriented, study comes first

Members may take action **only** on issues that have been **studied through fact-gathering** and on which the members are **in general agreement**



League positions are developed, after study and action, through “consensus”

1. Issues are studied
2. Based on study, League members reach “**consensus**” on issue questions
3. Board reviews and ratifies the process
4. “**Position**” is written based on **consensus**
5. “**Position**” becomes the basis for League **action**
6. The general membership approves or opposes the position as written at the League’s next annual meeting

There are two other bases on which League may act:

1. Through **concurrence** with the recommendations of a task force or other League organization,
2. By reference to League **principles** – beliefs about government that are deemed basic and incontrovertible

League positions are published and updated periodically

- National positions are found in **Impact on Issues**
- Oregon’s positions are found in **Issues for Action**
- _____’s positions are reported in _____



Impact on Issues is available at www.lwv.org
 Issues for Action is available at www.lwvor.org

Local Leagues meet for Program Planning each year

- Review all previous positions –local positions, state and national
- Consider doing
 - first-time study of an issue,
 - update of a previous study,
 - restudying an issue
 - action on an existing position
 - dropping a position
- Submit program recommendations to Board



Program recommendations are filtered through the Board's debate

- Will the issue inspire sufficient member interest and commitment?
- Can we be effective on the issue?
- Is governmental action necessary to solve the problem?
- Would we be duplicating another public-interest group's study?
- Is it an idea whose time has come politically?
- Do we have sufficient resources?



The Board makes a program recommendation to the membership



Members vote on the Board's recommended program at the local League's **Annual Meeting** or State/National **Convention**

LWV ___'s Annual Meeting is on _____, 2010
LWVUS's next Convention is in Washington, D.C. in June 2012

How the League Takes Action



Action is taken based on League Positions

- Issue identified
- League position reviewed
- Board approves taking action
- Action is taken:
 - Testimony on issue
 - Written material on issue
 - Public meetings on issue
 - Encourage citizen action on issue

How League's Activities are Financed



The League is primarily financed by dues

- _____ membership dues are \$ _____
 - Local Leagues pay assessments totaling \$ _____ to support LWVUS and LWVOR ("per member payments," or PMPs)
- Member contributions and fund raising provide additional financial support



In review – What you should know about the League:

- Our history
- Our mission
- Our principles
- How we operate
- Our voter service activities
- Program development and League positions
- Action
- How League's activities are financed

As a knowledgeable League member, you can make a difference!



*Do As Much Or As Little As You Want,
But Remember ...
Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport!*