

A Guide to Voters Guides

For Local Leagues

revised 2003

League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund



League of Women Voters of Texas

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INTRODUCTION

The *Voters Guide* is a vital part of the League of Women Voters' voters service/citizen education efforts. The guide is produced by the League of Women Voters and can be funded through the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund (LWV-TEF). Publication of a *Voters Guide* is also an appropriate project for the education fund organizations some local Leagues have established. The *Voters Guide* is an unbiased, nonpartisan report of candidates' views and/or ballot issues. In a *Voters Guide*, the League does not take a position in support of or opposition to the candidates, parties, or issues covered. The League of Women Voters never *endorses candidates*.

The *Voters Guide* is one of the most valued services Leagues provide for their communities. It is truly an effort to encourage the informed participation of citizens in the election process. Many citizens and their communities have come to depend on information printed in *Voters Guides*.

LWV-TEF provides the part of the *Voters Guide* involving candidates or ballot issues voted on by the entire state. A local League may purchase from LWV-TEF printed copies of the state *Voters Guide* (especially helpful when no local issues/races are being decided) or obtain a copy via e-mail (allows local format to be matched with the state's format). Local Leagues may change the format of the state *Voters Guide* only with permission of the state *Voters Guide* Director.

LWV-TEF VOTERS GUIDE POLICY

(Policies and Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards, LWV-TX)

1.4 Voters Guides Local/State League Responsibilities. *Voters Guides* for statewide ballot issues and candidates are published by the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund, hereafter called LWV-TEF. A local League produces the part of the *Voters Guide* that concerns ballot issues and candidates only in its geographic area of the state, i.e., county, city or district elections as well as Texas House and Senate and U.S. House of Representative seats. When these jurisdictions overlap two or more local League areas, the Leagues should work together to eliminate confusion. Refer to LWV-TX *Directory & Handbook* for a partial list of shared districts and lead Leagues. Additional policies relating to local League's use of the *Voters Guide* are found in the *Handbook for Local League TEF Projects* (LWV-TEF). Local Leagues reprinting the LWV-TEF *Voters Guide* must comply with relevant policies.

No Editing Policy There will be no editing of candidate replies.

Word Limits The instructions to candidates will state that LWV-TEF reserves the right to cut the portion of the candidate's answer that exceeds the specified word limit for a particular question. The excess words will be indicated on the *Voters Guide* with slash (//).

Inappropriate Candidate Responses When a candidate's response to a question for the *Voters Guide* is deemed inappropriate, as stated in the instructions to candidates, the entire response to the question will be deleted. The Administrator, the LWV-TEF Chair (President) and the *Voters Guide* Director will determine whether or not the response should be deleted. The candidate will be notified in advance of *Voters Guide* publication that the inappropriate response will not be published. In place of the inappropriate response, the *Voters Guide* will state, "Candidate's response did not meet the criteria listed in this *Voters Guide*."

PREPARING TO PUBLISH A *VOTERS GUIDE*

Timing In order to publish a *Voters Guide* successfully, it is essential to plan ahead. Establish a calendar, starting with the election date and working backwards. The following information can be used to assist in developing that calendar. The state League's Voters Service calendar lists a number of the following dates.

First, determine these dates:

- Election date
- Dates of early voting
- Filing deadline for candidates
- Date ballot will be certified

Then, determine dates for the following to be completed:

- Obtain LWV-TEF approval if needed
- Prepare VG distribution/marketing plan including press release dates, etc.
- Deadline to order LWV-TEF *Voters Guides*
- Local League committee drafts questions
- Local League board approves questions
- Local League board reviews and confirms or changes local policies
- Local League approves proposed details
- Prepare materials to send to candidates
- Prepare filler material and masthead of *Voters Guide*
- Obtain lists of candidates, addresses, e-mail addresses
- Obtain ballot wording
- Send mailing to candidates (all candidates on the same day) via post office (certified mail return receipt requested) and e-mail where possible
- Last date to receive responses from candidates
- Prepare copy for printing (where applicable)
- Prepare copy for web page
- Proof carefully, then submit copy to printer/place on web page
- Distribute *Voters Guides*
- Evaluate

Distribution Plan Develop a plan for distributing the *Voters Guide*. The League web site is a good starting point since it requires less people-power. But the site must be well-publicized with links from other sites to be effective. To preserve the integrity of the *Voters Guides*, local Leagues must carefully monitor this material once it's posted. Distribution of printed-copies should also be considered. Evaluate past distribution sites and also consider new and better places. Libraries, colleges, government buildings, hospitals, banks, post offices and other buildings frequented by citizens are good places to have the *Voters Guide* available and to publicize the web site. If at all possible, mail the *Voters Guides* to members, contributors, media, elected officials, and candidates. The Chamber of Commerce and local businesses may buy *Voters Guides* or make a contribution to the League in order to have *Guides* available for their employees and clients. Make every effort possible to provide a free *Guide* for each League member, each contributor, every local media outlet, all elected officials and all candidates. The

Voters Guide is a major reason people join and/or support the League.

NEWSPAPERS - Work with a local newspaper to use the *Voters Guide* as an insert in the paper or ask to have it printed in the paper as a community service. Begin negotiations early. Talk to other Leagues your size about methods of working with newspapers. If your local newspaper is part of a chain, find out which other newspapers are owned by the chain and if other Leagues work with those papers. It may take time to establish a working relationship with a newspaper, but the increased distribution of the *Voters Guide* is worth the work it takes.

Some Leagues purchase the LWV-TEF guides electronically and add their local information. Some Leagues reset copy for statewide information along with local information. When publishing a *Voters Guide* in a newspaper, some Leagues also buy an overrun of the newspaper insert and distribute it throughout the community. Others pay for publishing the guide in the newspaper.

Some Leagues do not have an insert; the *Voters Guide* is simply a part of the newspaper. It is inappropriate for the newspaper to use political ads as a part of the *Voters Guide*. Discuss this in advance with the newspaper. The League's nonpartisanship and related policies must be maintained. If you have questions, contact the state League *Voters Guide* Director.

Financing the *Voters Guide* can be done through a local Education Fund or through your League's account with LWV-TEF. Donations to these funds are deductible for tax purposes. (See the *LWV-Texas Education Fund Handbook for Local League TEF Projects* for more information.) Funding may be available through banks and companies with good community relations programs. Do not overlook in-kind funding from local newspapers. It is inappropriate to fund the *Voters Guide* with paid political advertisements because such ads compromise the League's nonpartisanship. It is also inappropriate to accept LWV-TEF donations from political candidates or political parties to pay for publishing the *Voters Guide*.

If you plan to fund the *Voters Guide* with funds in your LWV-TEF account or seek funds for that purpose, read the requirements in the *LWV-Texas Education Fund Handbook for Local League TEF Projects*. LWV-TEF approval is automatic when buying *Voters Guide* material from the state League. If you are printing local material, submit a project request form *prior* to spending any money. If your local Education Fund is funding the guide, the board should discuss and approve all aspects of the project.

Follow your League's policy for seeking and accepting bids for printing the *Voters Guide*. Ensure adequate time to get board approval.

List of Offices to be Filled and/or Wording of Ballot Issues Carefully check the list of offices to be filled and the wording on ballot issues, using several sources, if necessary. Check with the local county clerk or elections administrator, the Secretary of State, local party chairs or school districts for a more accurate list. Pay careful attention to district races that involve more than one League jurisdiction or more than one county. Obtaining correct addresses for candidates is often a sticking point so verify all potentially questionable addresses beforehand if possible.

The order of candidates and/or ballot issues in the *Voters Guide* should appear as they do on the ballot.

Election Date Uniform election dates are included in the League calendar in the LWV-TX *Directory & Handbook*, or obtain information from your county election officials or the Secretary of State's web page. Special election dates are set by the entity holding the election.

Last Date to Order State Voters Guides The order form for electronic or printed copies of the LWV-TEF *Voters Guide*, or the *Voters Guide* on disk, is sent to local Leagues from the state office prior to the deadline for ordering. The form lists the size of the paper and number of pages expected to be used in the state *Voters Guide*. This information is necessary when local copy will be added to state copy.

Filing Deadline and Date of Certification of the Ballot Information on filing deadlines and certification of the ballot can be found in materials from LWV-TEF or checking the web sites or by calling the Office of the Secretary of State (Elections Division), your county or city clerk, the elections administrator or school district.

Sample Ballot A sample ballot is useful as a check on offices, candidates, and other issues on the ballot. Obtain one from local elections officials after the ballot has been certified. Many counties now have these on their web sites.

CANDIDATE CHECKLIST

Development of Candidate Questions Candidate questionnaires can be drafted by one person or, preferably, by a small group who are familiar with the issues to be faced during the coming term of office. Candidate questions should be submitted for approval to the local League board. Decisions about elective offices to be covered by a *Voters Guide*, the number of questions to be asked, and the number of words allowed per answer are determined by the number of pages in the *Voters Guide*, the size of the *Voters Guide* print, the number of candidates, and the importance of the office. A person familiar with print media can help in making the decisions.

Candidates who are running unopposed in a particular election do not need to be asked questions, but should be listed by name, party, and office.

Because *Voters Guides* are published to inform voters, topics are not limited to those on which the League has a position or is studying. Try to predict issues in which citizens will be most interested. Avoid questions with a bias toward or against the incumbent, and topics which relate to only one candidate. Avoid questions that can be answered with "yes" or "no." Open-ended questions allow for development of the candidates' thoughts and logic. Questions from old *Voters Guides* may also be used.

Candidate Questionnaire Format The candidate questionnaire must include the following:

- Correct name(s) of sponsoring League organization(s) such as "LWV of Local League", "LWV of Local Education Fund," or "LWV-Texas Education Fund"
- The title "*Voters Guide*," and the date (month, date, year), noting that League style spells "Voters" without an apostrophe
- The title of the elected office and party, if applicable, for which the candidate is running
- Questions
- Area for candidate's printed name, verification signature, and date if it is not typed on the form

- How and where to submit the reply and the deadline for doing so

Cover Letter/Instruction Sheet The cover letter to candidates should be brief but include the following:

- The reason for the *Voters Guide* and the questionnaire
- The League's mission and an explanation of its nonpartisanship
- The word limit and method of counting words, numbers, etc.
- The no-editing policy
- Policy concerning inappropriate comments about opponents
- Deadline for return of the questionnaire
- How and where to submit the reply
- The name, phone number, and e-mail (if possible) of a League contact
- Where the *Voters Guides* will be available

Suggestions for Candidate Questionnaires:

- Number the items in the cover letter/instruction sheet.
- Send a letter to unopposed candidates informing them why they will only be listed in the *Voters Guide*.
- Letters can be addressed "Dear Candidate" and copied or, if time and expertise is available, addressed individually.
- Be sure to advise candidates that the guide will be published on the League's web page.
- If the candidate will be returning the information via e-mail, specify the format and request a paper copy as a follow-up.

Important Note:

The letter/instruction sheet and candidates questions must have board approval before any material is sent; approval should occur well in advance of the filing date to facilitate sending the materials as soon as all the candidates are known.

Preparation of Letters, Questionnaires, Envelopes, and Certified Receipts Prepare letters, questionnaires, envelopes, and certified mail receipts as early as possible. Murphy's Law operates here. It would be helpful to have a second person check each packet before mailing to make sure that the correct forms are included. Certified mail supplies (two forms) can be picked up from the post office and prepared before taking the prepared envelopes to the post office. If sending the questionnaire by certified mail is too expensive, plan to telephone candidates to be sure they received the request.

If faxing or e-mailing questions to a candidate, call first and determine a "contact person." Include this person's name on the attention line. Follow up with a call to ascertain the fax/e-mail was received and note with whom you spoke. Be sure to keep track of all contact with candidates and their staff.

Lists of Candidates and Addresses

PRIMARIES Local candidates file with each county party. Candidates whose districts are larger than one county file with the state party and the county clerk receives notification often a week or more after the filing deadline. Do not hesitate to call the local party chair or the state party office for information.

GENERAL ELECTIONS Candidates are certified by the person responsible for the election. Candidates whose districts are within the county are certified by the county clerk. Candidates whose districts involve more than one county are certified by the secretary of state. Allow time to obtain information from minor parties and independents as they may not have offices and staff.

CITY ELECTIONS Candidates file with the city secretary or clerk.

OTHER ELECTIONS (school board, hospital district, junior college district, bond elections) Candidates and ballot wording are filed with the elections officer of the district holding the election.

Be sure to verify that all candidates certified to be listed on the ballot receive questionnaires.

Timing of Questionnaires Sent to the Candidates The questionnaires must be mailed to the candidates allowing sufficient time for the candidates to receive the certified letter from the post office, fill out the questionnaire, find a picture, and return the material by the deadline. Receipt of green certified mail postal return cards indicates that a candidate has received the questionnaire. A League representative should call the candidates who have not received the questionnaire within a week after mailing. The use of e-mail is less expensive, quicker and easier, but may require safeguards to be sure candidates themselves receive the e-mails and respond.

Deadline for Returns from Candidates A time and place where candidates may leave the questionnaire should be included in the letter of instruction. The League office, mail drop, e-mail, or a fax number may be convenient for those who may complete the questionnaire close to the deadline, or for those who do not complete their questionnaire in time to mail it. Questionnaires postmarked the day of the deadline should be considered received by the deadline. Call candidates who have not responded two to three days before the deadline to remind them and to answer any questions. A short-cut method may be to call the party chair with the names of candidates who have not responded. (This may be possible only in a small town although this worked once for a statewide candidate.) The disadvantage of calling the party chair is that the League does not have any record of follow-up or problems encountered.

As questionnaires and pictures are returned, label the pictures and make a working copy of the questionnaire with the picture. Keep the originals in the League files for one year.

Before finalizing, count the number of words per answer and mark the last word allowable. If there is time, it is preferable to notify by phone those candidates who are over the word limit or inappropriate and explain again League policy. If they wish to amend their reply by phone or e-mail, send them a copy of the amended response.

PRODUCING A VOTERS GUIDE

Information on Ballot Issues The development of information on ballot issues (bond issues, charter amendments, etc.) should follow the form of the LWV-TEF guides for constitutional amendment elections. *Guides* should contain the ballot wording, an explanation of the ballot issue, an equal number of, and approximately equal space for, pros and cons. Be very careful to use nonpartisan language for the explanations and pros and cons. Allow time for editing.

Filler Material Filler material can be developed and completed in the weeks before the candidates questionnaires are returned. Appropriate items to use as filler are:

- Requirements, salaries, and duties of each contested office
- Secretary of State's phone number and website
- County Clerk/Election/Administrator's phone number and website
- Precinct map and polling places (revise for each *Voters Guide*. Check for accuracy with the election officer responsible, as this information may change from election to election)
- Maps of districts or lists of precincts in various races such as state representatives, county commissioners, justices of the peace, and constables
- Polling times
- Absentee voting information
- Early voting information
- Space for a mailing label, postage, and return address
- Dates and places of candidates forums and debates
- Eye-catching "Get Out the Vote" ads
- Small blank spaces labeled "Notes"
- List of contributors to the *Voters Guide*. As noted above; contributions from candidates are inappropriate.
- Contribution blank for local Education Fund or your LWV-TEF account. (May also want to include a list of the trustees of the local Education Fund)
- Statement: "For more information, contact LWV-Local League" followed by the local phone number and e-mail address.

It is not appropriate to put membership information in a *Voters Guide* funded with 501(c)(3) money. However, the 501(c)(4) organization may purchase a membership ad to be published in the *Voters Guide*.

Printing Date The date the copy will be given to the printer should be set early in the planning of the *Voters Guide*. Most printers prefer electronic copies of the *Guide*. Examples of previous *Voters Guides* may be helpful to the printer. It is best to give the printer all the copy at once, but most printers will accept later additions if notified in advance. The printer should be told that candidates' answers are to be typed as written by the candidate. Ask for the date when copy will be ready for proofreading and where the printer prefers it be done.

Proofreading the Copy Proofreading is a special skill and should be done by more than one person, at least one of whom should not have worked on this *Voters Guide*. Each set of corrections must be

proofread and the final copy needs to be checked just before printing. Reading copy aloud in teams of two works well. Give attention to typographical errors as well as general layout, consistency of listings and spacing, and omissions of candidates. Be sure that all pictures are matched to the correct candidates. Since time is critical, the proofreaders need to be alerted early of the probable proofreading date(s). Be certain that proofreaders know not to change candidates' mistakes. Individual answers, words, and names should be checked for correctness against the working copy, and total layout viewed for completeness and unbiased presentation. Correcting his or her own errors is part of the typesetter's fee; correcting your errors is not.

Printing Work with the printer to set the completion date. Allow plenty of time for printing. The distribution crew can easily use any extra time available.

Distribution Date Determine the date the *Voters Guides* will be picked up from the printer and delivered to distribution points and/or the date the *Voters Guide* will be published in the newspaper and placed on the web.

If the *Voters Guide* is to be distributed by the League, a convenient pick-up point is a must for members making deliveries. Arrange for members to pick up the *Voters Guides* at a board meeting or through a committee. If time permits, use bulk mail to distribute *Voters Guides*. Call your post office for information on bulk mail. Keep some *Voters Guides* to replenish stocks and for last minute orders.

Please remember to send three copies of your Voters Guide along with a report of the total number printed to the LWV state office.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Congratulatory Notes and Post Election Party After the election, thank you notes to all candidates are appropriate and help maintain the League's relationship with both winners and losers. E-mails can be used as a time-saver, though personal notes are nicer. A post- election party requires a separate committee and plans so complete that invitations are ready to send the day after the election.

Evaluation A written evaluation of the complete *Voters Guide* effort (instructions, time line, financing, distribution, and other matters) is helpful to future planners and will enable them to complete the job successfully.

OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT VOTERS GUIDES

What *Voters Guides* include

The **masthead** includes:

- League of Women Voters of Local League (use the correct title)
- Local League may substitute its own masthead if state material is included in a local *Voters Guide*
- LWV-TEF must be credited if any state material is used (See *LWV-TEF Handbook for Local League TEF Projects*)
- The title *Voters Guide* (there is no apostrophe in *Voters Guide*)

The **First page** should include:

- Explanation of the League's mission and nonpartisanship

- Date and title (general, primary, special) of the election
- Explanation of the word limit, no-editing and inappropriate response policy
- Credit for financing (e.g.. contributors, LWV-TEF or local Education Fund)
- Copyright appears on the title page. When state material is included, the guide must have both state and local copyrights. An informal copyright contains the following three elements:
 - "8", or the word "Copyright;"
 - the year of first publication of the work;
 - and the name of the owner of the copyright.

Formal registration is only necessary before any infringement suits may be filed. This may be done after the *Voters Guide* is published and after an infringement has occurred.

Format considerations:

- Leave adequate space for bulk-mailing label unless you plan to use a wrapper.
- Primary Elections
 - List parties alphabetically.
 - List candidates of the first party divided by elective offices.
 - List candidates of the second party divided by elective offices.

Political parties whose candidates for governor in the last election receive at least 20 percent of the votes cast or come in at least second in the race must hold a primary election to select candidates. Political parties whose candidates for governor receive between 2 and 20 percent of the votes in the previous election have the option of holding a primary. (Election code Chapter 172). The election code is available on the Secretary of State's web site.

- General Elections
 - Candidates listed by elective offices first and then by party.
 - Do not forget minor parties and independent candidates.
 - Make sure the total presentation is fair to candidates running in the same race.
 - It is best to group all candidates in the same race on one page or on facing pages.

Use the same order for questions throughout the guide. Having the questions run horizontally and candidates vertically is preferable because it is easier to read.

Check against a certified ballot list to be sure all candidates and/or ballot issues are listed completely. Also check the wording of ballot issues and exact method for indicating vote (for or against, yes or no).

- Title of office
- Candidates' names as they will appear on the ballot
 - Party affiliation if applicable
 - Use of incumbent if applicable
 - Use of titles if applicable

Check that spelling, grammar, and answers are the same as the candidate's original answer; cut only for length

Check that picture is placed with correct candidate

Check the dates in the filler, especially if information from previous *Voters Guides* is used

Voters Guides do not include:

- Political advertising
- League membership information if funded with LWV-TEF or local Education Fund money
- Any information that is partisan

Policy Decisions Made by the Local Board (Policy should be reviewed each year, but it is advisable not to change policy unnecessarily.)

- How to count words (such as "a," "the," hyphenated words, numbers, etc.)
- Determination of inappropriate responses from candidates
- Whether candidates can re-write responses that are too long or inappropriate
- Editing policy
- Use of titles for candidates (Dr., Professor, etc.)
- Use of incumbent designation
- Format (paragraph form vs. lists, underlining, use of capital letters etc.)
- Funding of the *Voters Guide* (how and who)
- Whether to list contributors
- Whether to solicit donations to LWV-TEF or local Education Fund.

The Local Board Must Approve

- All policy decisions
- Wording of questions for candidates
- Word limit for each answer
- Number of *Voters Guides* to distribute
- Distribution plan including working with newspapers
- How to fund the *Voters Guide*

Helpful Publications

In League (LWVUS Pub. #275) Revised edition available on LWVUS website at www.lwv.org

Making A Difference (LWVEF Pub. #330)

League Directory & Handbook (LWV-TX)

LWV-Texas Education Fund Handbook for Local League TEF Projects (LWV-TEF)

Policies and Procedures: A Manual for State and Local League Boards (LWV-TX)

Appendix:

Sample Candidate Packet

-Letter to Candidates

-Instructions for Questionnaire

-Questionnaire

Dear Candidate:

The League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund (LWV-TEF) invites you to participate in the *Voters Guide* for the November 2006 General Election. This publication provides tens of thousands of voters with unbiased, nonpartisan information on candidates for statewide elected public office. This year our *Voters Guide* will include candidates for **U. S. Senator, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, General Land Office Commissioner, Agriculture Commissioner, Railroad Commissioner, Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, and the District Appeals Courts.**

Enclosed are the **LWV-TEF Questionnaire** and accompanying **Instruction Sheet**. The instructions address word limits, word count, response style, Spanish translation, photo, and other issues. We ask that you confine your responses to the questions asked and avoid references to opponents. As stated in the instructions: if your response to a question or questions contains remarks about other persons or candidates, it will result in the deletion of your entire response to the question(s). **Please read the Instruction Sheet carefully.**

The 2006 General Election *Voters Guide* will be published on the state and national League websites (www.lwvtexas.org and www.lwv.org) allowing more Texas voters to have online access to information about candidates on the ballot. By signing the questionnaire, you allow the League to publish your responses online, as well as in print, as submitted and without any editing. **We must have the SIGNED Questionnaire in order to publish your Responses.**

Please submit your answers in both Spanish and English. The League will again publish a separate Spanish edition of the *Voters Guide* for citizens whose primary language is Spanish.

The deadline for returning your completed questionnaire is no later than 12 Midnight on Thursday, September 7, 2006. * EXTENDED until 5 PM FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2006.** Responses and photos may be emailed to lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org. Signed Questionnaires must be faxed by the deadline to: 512/472-4114. Email is the preferred method of receipt followed up by a fax of the signed questionnaire and your responses.

Thank you for your participation in the 2006 General Election *Voters Guide*. This information will help educate Texans and involve them in the electoral process. You may direct questions to our state office in Austin at 512/472-1100 or lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org.

Sincerely,

Judy Hollinger
Chair, Voter Services

ATTACHMENTS: Questionnaire, Instruction sheet



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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES

*These instructions will assist you in preparing responses to the enclosed questionnaire.
The League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund will adhere to these instructions.*

1. **Your reply must be received by 12 midnight ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2006.** If your reply is not received by that date and time, the *Voters Guide* will be published with the words “*No reply received*” beside your name. **Responses may be EMAILED** to: lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org.
PLUS, FAX (512/472-4114) a signed copy of the list of Questions and Responses to ensure SECURITY and ACCURACY. No late responses will be accepted.
2. Your responses will NOT be edited for spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors.
3. Please:
 - **Do** provide direct, relevant responses to the questions asked.
 - **DO NOT REFER TO OPPONENTS.** If your response to a question contains remarks about other persons or candidates, it will result in the deletion of your entire response to the question. Instead the words “*Response does not meet criteria*” will be printed.
4. The **word limits** on the questionnaire are strictly adhered to. *We will not print any part of your response beyond the word limit.* Our **rules for counting words** are:
 - a. ALL words, numbers, and symbols are counted, including *a, and, &, +, but, I, the.*
 - b. If numbers are used in a list (1., 2., 3. etc.), each number counts as a word.
 - c. Abbreviations and acronyms (USA) count as one word, while UNITED STATES OF AMERICA counts as four words.
 - d. Dates written as 1/12/04 count as one word, while January 12, 2004 counts as three words.
 - e. Words combined by hyphens or slashes (up-to-the-minute; past/present) will be counted as separate words. The examples given would count as four words and two words.
5. Please **submit** your responses in **both Spanish AND English.** All responses must be typewritten and double-spaced. Spanish text must be a **direct translation** of the English text.
6. Replies will be printed in a conventional upper- and lower-case format. **Bold typeface, italics, underlining** and ALL CAPITALS will be converted to standard format.
7. Replies will be printed margin-to-margin in block paragraph form, not in outline or list format. Please do not use bullet points.
8. **Keep a copy** of the questionnaire and your response for your files.
9. All replies and pictures become the property of LWV-TX Education Fund. The *Voters Guide* is **copyrighted** and may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express permission of the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund.
10. Please send a **photo (black and white/.jpg preferred)** along with your response. Electronic photos are preferred and may be emailed to: lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org. Mail hard copy to address below.
11. **QUESTIONS?** Contact the League of Women Voters of Texas at 512/472-1100; fax: 512/472-4114; e-mail: lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org.



**League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund
2006 General Election Voters Guide Questionnaire**

Return no later than: 12 midnight September 7, 2006

COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

Candidates Name (as printed on ballot) _____

Party _____ Telephone _____ Fax _____

Campaign Contact _____ Title _____

Campaign Address _____

1. Describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office? **(50 words)**
2. What should be the role of the Texas Department of Agriculture in protecting agricultural lands and rural communities in a state with a high rate of urbanization? **(75 words)**
3. How would you balance environmental concerns and economic interests of Texas farmers and consumers? **(75 words)**

CANDIDATES STATEMENT: I release for publication by the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund, in print and online, my responses to this questionnaire, along with my photograph.

Candidate signature _____ **Date** _____

Please verify that...

- The **word count** does not exceed stated limits for each question.
- Your response does **not** contain references to other candidates
- A black and white, .jpg (preferred) **photograph** of yourself has been emailed
Or is enclosed
- A **SIGNED copy** of this questionnaire and the answers are **faxed** to the state League office (512/472-4114)
- Your **answers** to this questionnaire are **emailed** to the state League office (lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org)

If you have questions, please call or email:

League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund
1212 Guadalupe #107, Austin, TX 78701

