

League of Women Voters of Texas

PROGRAM PLANNING LEADER'S GUIDE

Keeping the Grassroots Green

All dates for submittal of documents can be found on the Timeline, page 5

Guide Contents

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EXPLANATION OF LEAGUE PROGRAM

In League, “program” is the process of study and advocacy of issues and is a core component of our mission. Our program positions consist of all the prior issues selected by League members on which we reached consensus, and our advocacy is based on these positions. League members review and readopt them at our state convention every two years. The positions are listed and explained in *Program Perspectives* (see link provided under *RELATED FILES*).

The Program Planning Process

The League is a grassroots organization, so every two years before our state convention Leagues hold “program planning” meetings in which the members make recommendations concerning program issues. You have three options:

- Suggest a new topic for study
- Suggest a review of a current position for a possible update
- Suggest an amendment to an existing position, or a new position, to be adopted by concurrence

What will the state board do with the recommendations?

At its winter board meeting, the state board will consider all recommendations and write a proposed program for adoption at Convention in the spring. The proposed program may consist of a recommended new study and/or amendments to existing program positions.

Any item suggested in the program planning process but not included in the board’s proposed program may be brought up for debate at Convention if a majority of the delegates vote to consider it. If the delegates vote to approve it by a two-thirds vote, it will be included in the proposed program.

IMPORTANT: No program recommendation can be considered by Convention unless it was communicated to the state board at least three months before the convention. (*Bylaws*, Article X, Section 2.a)

EXPLANATION OF THE OPTIONS

New Study Recommendation

In generating ideas, consider the following:

- Is there widespread member interest?
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is state government action needed to address this issue?

Please write a brief summary of the scope. The scope is an explanation of the areas to be explored and the parameters of the study. (The Focus and Scope of the Human Trafficking in Texas study adopted in 2012 can be found on the Issue Studies page of the LWV-TX website, <http://www.lwvtexas.org/issues.php>. Also, more information can be found on pages 6-7 of *League Program, Study to Action in Ten Steps*, (see link provided under *RELATED FILES*). Each League may suggest only one new study.

NOTE: You may want to recommend a statewide study of an issue that your League has studied locally. This would provide members across the state the opportunity to learn about the issues in order to reach full understanding and agreement.

Review/Update of a Current Position

This will require careful reading of our current positions. You might assign members to read the positions in each of our four program areas: Government, Administration of Justice, Social Policy/Human Resources, and Natural Resources (found in *Program Perspectives*). Then consider the following:

- Have new topics or related issues emerged since this position was written?
- Have the goals been achieved?
- Is there still member understanding and agreement concerning this position?

The state board will either send suggested reviews to a committee for in-depth review, or recommend a restudy to the state convention. Each League may suggest only one review. Please write a proposed scope for the review.

Concurrence Recommendation (amendment or position statement)

Leagues have two options in proposing a concurrence on the floor of the convention:

Option 1: Propose an amendment to a state position

In your review of state positions you may notice the need for an addition or other amendment, but you feel it does not warrant a full review. Please provide the

suggested wording for the proposed amendment and the reasons it is needed in your Program Planning Report Form for state board consideration. If the state board recommends the change, no further action is needed by the local League.

Option 2: Propose the adoption of local position by the state convention

Some local Leagues study issues that have broad regional interest, and then find that their position needs action by the state legislature. Our bylaws allow a local League to propose the adoption of a local League position by concurrence at convention and make it part of a state position (*Bylaws*, Article X, Section 2.c). Before recommending a concurrence, consider:

- Is the position relevant to other parts of the state?
- Is action needed by the state legislature to bring about change?
- Is the issue one which members can understand and decide whether to concur without a study?

NOTE: If the position deals with an area in which members do not have general background, the board recommends that you propose it as a study rather than a concurrence. If you have questions, contact the LWV-TX Program VP.

IMPORTANT: A League that plans to propose adopting either a local position or an amendment **not recommended by the state board** by using concurrence must follow the following procedures (*Bylaws*, Article X, Section 2.c):

- Send the focus and scope of the position in the Program Planning Report, or itemize the proposed amendment. You will be notified if your recommendation was not included in the state board's proposed program. If not included, complete the following steps:
- Give notice of the League's intent to propose a concurrence to the state office to be sent to the state League and all local Leagues and MAL units at least six weeks before the convention.
- Send background information, including pros and cons on the issue, and an explanation of the rationale for using this form of member agreement to the state office to be sent to the state League and all local Leagues and MAL units at least 30 days before the convention.

THE PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING

Prepare for your Program Planning Meeting

- Use your *VOTER* or email to publicize Program Planning so members begin thinking about possible issues not covered by current positions. Suggest "hot" topics. Emphasize members' participation as the "grassroots" of our organization.
- Assign some members to familiarize themselves with current positions by reviewing *Program Perspectives* (see link provided under *RELATED FILES*).

- Set a date for members who cannot attend the program planning meeting to submit input.
- Approve your Program Planning Report at a board meeting before sending it to LWV-TX. (NOTE: only one report per League may be submitted.)

Suggested Program Planning Meeting Outline

(Item numbers refer to items on Program Planning Report Form)

1. Introduction (10 minutes)

- Explain League program and the program planning process.
- If former convention delegates are present, have them highlight the debate, lobbying, and floor action of program adoption.

2. Review of Current Program (20 minutes) – Items 1 and 2

- Use copies of *We Support 2012-2014* to review current League program (see link provided under *RELATED FILES*).
- Have members who reviewed the four areas discuss items of interest, such as program areas that seem inactive or outdated.
- Explain to members that delegates will readopt these positions at Convention.
- Ask members for suggestions of programs they would like to see updated.
- Through consensus, decide on one position to recommend for review or amendment.
- If a review is recommended, write a proposed focus and scope. (Item 1)
- If you want to recommend minor changes to a program, but not an entire review, recommend them as an amendment to a state League position. (Item 2)

3. Solicit ideas for New Studies (20 minutes) – Item 3

- Ask members for ideas of subjects they feel need to be studied by the League.
- Through consensus, decide on one subject to recommend.
- Write a focus and scope for the study.

4. Recommend concurrence with a local position (optional) – Item 4

- Review what this means.
- If your League wants to recommend a concurrence, review requirements in Concurrence section.

Complete the Report Form

- Program chair completes the Report Form for board approval.
- Word or PDF document form may be sent by email to lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org.
- Printed form may be mailed to LWV-Texas, 1212 Guadalupe, #107, Austin 78701.
- Form may be faxed to (512) 472-4114.

Timeline

State Program Planning and Program Adoption

Deadline for receipt of Program Planning Report is **JANUARY 20, 2018**

Fall 2017

- Set a meeting date for state program planning.
- Program planning may be done at a board meeting, but members should be invited.
- Complete plans for soliciting member suggestions.
- Local board approves Program Planning Report and sends it to LWV-TX.

January 20, 2018

- **DEADLINE** for returning Program Planning Report form to the state League office. Retain a copy for your files.

Winter LWV-TX Board Meeting – January 26-28, 2018

- The LWV-TX Program Committee analyzes Report Form responses and drafts proposals for Board review. The Board approves a 2018-2020 Proposed Program for LWV-TX.

February-March 2018

- Local Leagues are notified of highlights of proposed program, including board recommended and not-recommended items. Mailing includes guidance on campaigning at state Convention for not-recommended items (see third bullet below).
- **Leagues recommending a concurrence** that is not part of the proposed program and wishing to bring it to the floor of Convention must send the state League office their Notice of Intent at least six weeks before convention, **March 17, 2018**, and the background information at least 30 days before convention, **March 27, 2018** (see Concurrence Recommendation section above). These will be forwarded to the state League and all local Leagues and MAL units.
- **Campaign for adoption of a not-recommended new study proposal:** Leagues are encouraged to campaign if their recommendation is not part of the proposed program. They may email one copy of a flyer promoting consideration and adoption of their not-recommended study to the state League office by February 10. The flyer will be forwarded to all local League presidents, MAL unit chairs, the state board and off-board issue chairs. The flyer should include the focus and scope of the program item, and statements about the need for such a study. The League proposing such an item should schedule a caucus at Convention to discuss their proposal with other Leagues.
- **Convention Workbook** is mailed containing the complete proposed program and list of not-recommended items suggested by local Leagues (sent at least 30 days before convention).

April 27-29, 2018: LWV-TX Convention in Kerrville

- Presentation of proposed program, including proposed new study, restudy/update, or concurrence. Receive motions for consideration of not-recommended items.
- Debate on proposed program and any not-recommended items granted consideration by a majority of Convention delegates.
- Vote on adoption of proposed program (simple majority vote needed).
- Vote on adoption of not-recommended items granted consideration (2/3 majority needed).

RELATED FILES

Program Planning Report Form

<http://lwvtexas.org/files/ProgramPlanningReportForm2017.docx.doc>

We Support 2017 (short summaries of program positions)

http://lwvtexas.org/files/We_Support_2017.pdf

Program Perspectives 2016-2018 (positions in Full)

http://lwvtexas.org/files/Program_Perspectives_2016-2018_4.22.16.pdf

League Program, Study to Action in Ten Steps,

<http://lwvtexas.org/files/PublicationsStudyToActionTenSteps.pdf>

LWV-TX Bylaws, http://lwvtexas.org/files/LWV-TX_Bylaws_2016.pdf