

2009-2011 PROGRAM PLANNING PACKET

Time Line: Return response form to the state office by February 15, 2009.

Each year, local Leagues are asked to review either their state League positions or their national League positions, depending on which convention is coming up. This is the year for LWVNJ to have its convention (a one-day meeting on May 2, 2009), so NJ positions will be reviewed. After compiling the local Leagues' recommendations, the LWVNJ Board will recommend a program to convention delegates, who will set the direction for our lobbying and citizen education for the next two years.

Suggestions for your program planning meeting

- Involve as many members as possible. Avoid doing program planning at a board meeting unless there is no alternative. Explore ways to entice members to participate.
- The program VP or an active knowledgeable program director or member is a good choice for leading the meeting. Select a recorder (secretary) for the meeting.
- If possible, circulate the Position Summary ahead of time so that members have a chance to prepare and the meeting can move more quickly.
- Provide each attendee with a copy of the Response Form so that members have a clear sense of the number of decisions that must be made

Resources:

- *Study & Action 2007-2009* (LWVNJ), available in hard copy and at www.lwvnj.org.
- Copies of Position Summary, included with this mailing and on www.lwvnj.org.
- Copies of Response Form
- Definitions, Criteria and Guidelines

Meeting Outline

- Introduction—purpose of meeting and background information
- Discussion of program areas; determination of member recommendations to drop, reaffirm or update each item
- Consideration of a new study (see guidelines below).

DEFINITIONS, CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Reaffirm a position

Definition: Members are committed to the position and will be involved in supporting LWVNJ efforts to pursue position's goals. Member understanding and agreement exist.

Criteria: As a practical matter this is the option you will choose if you do not want to drop or update a position

Drop a position

Definition: Position is not useful in its present form or is not supported by members. If delegates at convention drop a position, LWVNJ cannot use the position to lobby. Any future action must be taken on other related positions or will require a new study.

Criteria: consider the following questions

- Is the position still meaningful today?
- Does the position represent current member thinking?
- Do members care enough about the position to take action and devote resources to it?

Guidelines: List reasoning of members for recommendation to drop under “Comments.”

Update a position

Definition: A study of limited scope to reevaluate an existing position in light of new information, changed circumstances, and/or conflict with another existing position.

Criteria: consider the following questions:

- Is new information available that might change the position?
- Have the circumstances surrounding the position changed significantly?
- Does the position conflict with another League position?
- Do members need a thorough update in order to have the understanding necessary to take action?
- Are there gaps in the position?

Guidelines:

1. **A statement of scope of the update must accompany your recommendation.** The scope defines the parameters or limits of the update—the specific areas you wish to reexamine or expand and questions you want answered by the update.
2. **Include an estimate of time and resources that are needed to accomplish the update.** Do we have members with expertise or connections to those with expertise to gather needed research materials?
3. Consider **looking for allies among other local Leagues** to insure sufficient people resources to accomplish the limited study.

New study

Definition: Topic for research and discussion by members with the aim of reaching consensus and establishing a position upon which LWVNJ may take action. A new study is usually a two-year process.

Criteria: consider the following questions:

- Assuming a two-year process to reach consensus is the timing right to allow the League to act on the new position?
- Will League involvement make a difference?
- Is the issue one on which most League members will spend time and effort to study and come to consensus?

- Are members in your local League able to take a support role on a study committee?

Guidelines:

- 1) Wording of a new study item should be easily understood, general enough for flexibility, yet specific enough to indicate the desired goals and scope.
- 2) **A statement of scope of the study must accompany your recommendation.** The scope defines the parameters of the study. It is an explanation in more detail of the limits outlined in the wording. It shows how broad or narrow an approach you wish to take.
- 3) **Include an estimate of time and resources that are needed to accomplish the study.**
- 4) **Consider looking for allies among other local Leagues** to insure sufficient people are available to research the issue, prepare meeting-ready materials for local Leagues, develop consensus questions, tally consensus responses and write the position.
- 5) **Decide if you wish to propose a consensus or concurrence process.**

Procedure for Update or New Study: Study Committee Tasks

- Examine wording and scope approved by delegates and begins gathering research materials
- Determine what background materials should be recommended to local Leagues.
- Develop consensus questions or concurrence statement.
- Prepare meeting-ready discussion guide for local Leagues consensus or concurrence meeting.
- Evaluate responses and analyze against criteria for a valid state consensus or concurrence.
- Prepare position statement for consideration by the LWVNJ Board.

Consensus in the League has two meanings. It is the process by which members, after study, reach agreement through group discussion of an issue. It is also the agreement reached, representing the “sense of the meeting” as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. It is more than a simple majority, although it is not necessarily unanimity.

Concurrence is agreeing with a statement of position. A concurrence can be with what the Study Committee recommends or on a position reached by another League.

POSITIONS IN BRIEF

Refer to *Study & Action 2007-2009* for the complete text and history of current positions.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Death Penalty (2004): Oppose the death penalty under any circumstances and for any type of crime. Life imprisonment without possibility of parole is the appropriate alternative.

Family Court (1977): Support adequate funding and training of personnel.

Juvenile Justice (1996): Support rehabilitation programs including a broad range of graduated sanctions and services and adequate funding for community-based facilities. Support measures to reduce disproportionate representation of minority youth in the system and a single independent state level agency.

Mediation in the Municipal Courts (1989): Support statewide implementation of mediation programs.

EDUCATION

Charter Schools (2000): Support charter schools to encourage innovation within the public schools, while preserving the public character of public education. Traditional public school districts should be protected from arbitrary funding changes with respect to charter school funding.

Private School Choice (2007): Oppose use of public funds to support students in non-public schools.

School District Regionalization (2007): Support decision-making by citizens of affected districts on school district regionalization and sharing of services so long as constitutional rights are not abridged.

State Role in Achieving Quality Education (1993): Support the sharing of responsibility between state and local school boards for educational outcomes; support state assistance and monitoring; stateset curriculum content standards, and structural flexibility.

Teacher Certification and Professional Development (1994): Support continuation and improvement of the alternative route to certification to assure substantive training, valid evaluation and appropriate support. Support periodic renewal of certification and requirement of continuing professional development.

Tenure (1982): Support elimination of tenure for administrators.

FISCAL POLICY

Dedication of Taxes (1996): Oppose the constitutional dedication of taxes.

Public Education Funding (2001): Promote state fiscal measures to improve and equalize

opportunities for public education including aid for school facilities and adequate support for children with special needs. Protect school districts from arbitrary funding changes. State education mandates should be used to meet educational standards, include significant state funding and adequate time for implementation.

Tax and Spending Limits (1981): Support limits on taxation and spending by municipal, county school and state governments.

Tax and Spending Policy (1996): Promote sound fiscal policies through a progressive and equitable tax structure with adequate revenue to provide state and local services to meet the needs of New Jersey citizens. Support measures to reduce dependence on the local property tax and disparities in tax rates and services among communities.

GOVERNMENT

Campaign Finance (2001): Support an open and accountable system including contribution and expenditure disclosure and limitations. Support a system of public and private funding. Support amending the New Jersey Constitution to provide for indirect initiative and referendum limited to campaign finance, lobbying, ethics and election procedures.

Independent Commissions and Authorities (1989): Support accountability, openness, coordination in planning between commissions and authorities and oversight by executive branch.

Structures and Procedures (1987): support longer staggered terms and single member districts.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Integrated Smart Growth Position (2005)

Land Use Decision Making (2005): Support strengthening state and regional role in implementing the State Development and Redevelopment Plan in order to preserve natural resources and provide for Smart Growth. Support conservation of open space, biodiversity and farmland; historic preservation, and provision of low and moderate-income housing consistent with environmental policies.

Water Resources (2005): Support educational and enforcement programs to eliminate both point and non-point pollution; watershed management to protect water quality and quantity; storm water management; non-structural approach to flood damage reduction; public participation in decisions.

Transportation (2005): Support transportation system which provides a minimum level of mobility, contributes to sound land use planning, is consistent with local and regional development goals, considers energy conservation and environmental protection, and enhances the social and economic welfare of residents. To achieve these goals we support the use of public money to subsidize public transportation for both operating and capital costs.

Other Natural Resource Positions

Radioactive Waste Management (1983): Public health, and safety should be the primary considerations in managing radioactive wastes.

Solid Waste Management (1986): Strategies for managing municipal solid waste should be implemented in the following order: source reduction, recycling, waste-to-energy, and landfill.

SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES

Housing and Zoning (1991): Folded into Smart Growth Position, 2005.

Transportation (1986): Folded into Natural Resource Positions

WOMEN & FAMILY ISSUES

Child Care (1987): Promote state efforts to increase the availability of quality child care service, but recognize that parents, employers, federal and local government—society as a whole—have role.

Domestic Violence (1991): Support measures that protect victims and survivors.

Family Life Education (2001): Support the teaching of comprehensive family life education in the public schools.

Legal Status of Women (1979): Promote laws that protect the rights of women. Support revisions of property and inheritance laws, expeditious and less costly divorce procedures, equitable distribution statutes, strengthening of laws regarding disclosure of assets and methods for collecting support payments.

Reproductive Rights/Public Policy on Abortion (1982): Support the right of the individual to make the choice of whether or not to terminate a pregnancy.

**RESPONSE FORM
STATE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATION**

Please return by February 15, 2009 to LWVNJ, 204 West State Street, Trenton 08608

League of Women Voters of _____
 Number of members participating: _____ Name of person reporting: _____
 Telephone: _____ email: _____

	Drop	Reaffirm	Update	Comments
Administration of Justice				
Death Penalty (2004)				
Family Court (1977)				
Juvenile Justice (1996)				
Mediation in Municipal Courts (1989)				
Education				
Charter Schools (2000)School				
Private School Choice (2007)				
School District Regionalization (2007)				
State Role in Achieving Quality Education (1993)				
Teacher Certification & Development. (1994)				
Tenure (1982)				
Fiscal Policy				
Dedication of Taxes (1996)				
Public Education Funding (2001)				
Tax & Spending Limits (1981)				
Tax & Spending Policy (1986)				
Government				
Campaign Finance Reform (2001)				
Independent Commissions/ Authorities (1989)				
Office of Lt. Governor (2005)				
Structure and Procedure (1987)				

	Drop	Reaffirm	Update	Comments
Natural Resources				
Land Use Decision Making (2005)				
Water Resources (2005)				
Transportation (2005)				
Radioactive Waste (1983)				
Solid Waste Management (1986)				
Women and Family				
Child Care (1987)				
Domestic Violence (1991)				
Family Life Education (2001)				
Legal Status of Women (1979)				
Reproductive Rights (1982)				

Additional comments on program recommendations:

Recommendation(s) for New Study or Update, including the scope of your proposal: