

# LWVSA PROGRAM PLANNING-2010

The League of Women Voters believes that informed and active citizens, joining together to explore common problems and identify shared goals, can resolve the tough issues that confront our communities, our nation and our world.

League works to build informed citizenry through League program. We study and educate our members and our communities about public policy concerns, we encourage public discussion of these problems and citizen participation in solving them, and we take action to achieve solutions that contribute to the benefit of all.

League program – our education and advocacy work – focuses on public policy issues. The League’s work on public policy issues is directed toward government action. That action could include passage of laws, promulgation of regulations and policies, provision of adequate budgets and staffing, enforcement of laws and regulations, planning and citizen involvement opportunities.

**The League must have a position before it takes action.** Advocacy, or action, begins when Leagues select an issue for concerted study, followed by member agreement through consensus or concurrence. Local League program focuses on issues that can be addressed by local government, state League program addresses state level issues, and the LWVUS program addresses national issues.

**Program Planning: the way the League chooses its issues.** League members choose issues to place on League’s public policy agenda, and consider what role their local League will play in addressing those issues during the program planning process. This year Spokane League members will discuss items for local and national program priorities (Next year will be state issues.) The process culminates when the program is adopted at the local annual meeting (May 20, 2010) and the biennial state or national convention. LWVUS will meet in Convention In Atlanta, June 11-15, 2010.

Here are some questions to consider in selecting an issue for League work:

- Which issues are of such vital concern to our members and our community that they demand attention now?
- Which issues will benefit from the League’s special expertise or perspective?
- Is there a real possibility that citizens working on this issue can bring about positive change?
- Will League work on this issue have a measurable impact on our community or state? How will results be evaluated?
- Will working on this issue give the League opportunities to collaborate with other groups and individuals?

Once members have decided that an issue of public concern requires League attention, we must determine what role the League should play in addressing those issues, including:

**1. Study: to reach member agreement on an issue so that the League can take action.**

**Questions to ask:**

- Does the League already have a position?
- Is there a government solution to the problem?
- Is there enough time to do a study and then act to influence the resolution of the problem?

**2. Update: to review an issue**

**Questions to ask:**

- Is the League position still useful?
- Is the position sufficiently general?
- Are there significant developments in the issues area that are not reflected in the position?
- What is the proper scope of effort to update the position?

**3. Action: always the goal of the League’s study process. Member understanding and strong support are essential for successful action.**

**Questions to ask:**

- Are the timing and the political realities right for success?
- Does the community expect or need the League to be a player on this issue?
- Will League action on this issue make a significant difference?
- Could a focused, targeted action campaign enhance LWV visibility and stature?

- Do our members understand our position and our action goals?

**4. Citizen Education: to help citizens understand the complexities of an issue and encourage people to participate in reaching a solution; can also lay the groundwork for successful advocacy.**

**Questions to ask:**

- Does our community need help in understanding this issue and its possible solutions?
- Is there enough time to develop and implement our project before citizens must make a decision?
- Is it more important to help citizens understand this issue than to advocate our League position at this time?

**Definitions:**

**TITLE** identifies the proposed program item.

**SCOPE** should outline the direction of the work and include the important components. One paragraph is usually long enough. The scope explains whether it is a new study, an update on an issue previously studied, a citizen education project or an action campaign.

**OUTLOOK** for work should help members determine whether the item is practical and manageable.

- The expected length of time needed for completion
- Possible sources of information
- Role of local Leagues
- Members willing to work on the project and contact information.

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**National Program Planning**

**Preparation:** To effectively participate in National Program Planning, members will need to review the current LWVUS positions and then give thought to upcoming needs.

- Prepare for participation in Program Planning by looking at *Impact on Issues*, 2008-2010, which is available on the LWVUS website at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org). Positions in Brief are available in the *LWVSA Member Handbook*.
- Join on-line discussion to gain more background - members with issue interests can join the LWVUS Convention Preparation discussion list, where members will be discussing and/or promoting

issues for consideration at National Convention. Subscriptions can be made at <https://member.lwv.org/member.asp>. (and it really is quite easy to sign up!) There seem to be three main topics on the on-line discussion – Civics Education, Federal Role in Public Education and a National Department of Peace. If one of those topics is of interest to you, and you think that the Spokane League should add its voice of support, check out the information and come to your unit meeting prepared to discuss. Discussion leaders will also have information.

- You are encouraged to evaluate possible issues by asking, for example:
  - ~~Is there widespread member interest?
  - ~~Is this a timely issue?
  - ~~Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

**Position Headings and Positions** are listed very briefly here. For more detail refer to the *LWVSA Member Handbook* for an expanded Positions in Brief, or refer to complete write-ups in *Impact of Issues 2008-2010* (available at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)).

**Representative Government** – *Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive*

- Voting Rights (Citizen’s Right to Vote, DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation)
- Election Process (Apportionment, Campaign Finance, Selection of the President)
- Citizen Rights (Citizen’s Right to Know/Citizen Participation, Individual Liberties, Public Policy on Reproductive Choices)
- Congress and the Presidency (Congress and the Presidency)

**International Relations** – *Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.*

- United Nations
- Trade
- U.S. Relations with Developing Countries
- Arms Control
- Military Policy and Defense Spending

**Natural Resources** – *Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.*

- Natural Resources
- Resource Management
- Environmental Protection and Pollution Control (Air Quality, Energy, Land Use, Water Resources, Waste Management, Nuclear Issues)
- Public Participation
- Agriculture Policy

**Social Policy** – *Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.*

- Equality of Opportunity (Equal Rights, and Education, Employment and Housing)
- Fiscal Policy (Tax Policy, Federal Deficit, Funding of Entitlements)
- Health Care
- Immigration
- Meeting Basic Human Needs (Income Assistance, Support Services, Housing Supply)
- Child Care
- Early Intervention for Children at Risk
- Violence Prevention
- Gun Control
- Urban Policy
- Death Penalty

**Process:** To participate in National Program Planning, each unit will need to recommend **one item** from among the following four recommendations (*propose one new study, or one review, or one concurrence, or make no recommendation.* Leagues are no longer being asked to adopt existing program, although convention delegates will continue to do so.

**1. Recommend a Review of an existing League Position - yes or no**

Leagues may recommend one LWVUS position for review during each biennium. Again, it is helpful to the staff and Program Planning Committee, if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same review, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope. If adopted, a

Review Committee will be appointed to examine the position and, if appropriate, suggest changes and updating.

Is there any LWVUS position (see Positions in Brief) your unit proposes for review?

Choose Position Heading and a particular position (from list above):

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Write a brief summary (less than 200 words) for a new scope (what you want to see changed)

**2. Recommend a New Study or Program Item – yes or no**

To propose a new study, units need to complete a brief statement (200 words or less), stating the scope of the study. List this statement with the appropriate position heading – Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, or Social Policy. A statement of scope lists the areas to be explored, the emphasis on a particular aspect of the issue, and the parameters of the study. It is helpful to the staff and Program Planning Committee, if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same study, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope. This is where you can find that helpful background information on the on-line discussion described earlier.

If your unit has a recommendation for a study item, please complete:

Position Heading (one of the four main areas):

Complete a *brief summary of the scope of the study in 200 words or less.*

**3. Recommend a Concurrence – yes or no**

A proposed concurrence is based on a previous state or local League position. Although the LWVUS Bylaws do not require that a proposed concurrence be based on a previous League position, a proposed concurrence is generally more credible if there has been a previous study and position on the subject. .

To recommend concurrence, fill in the appropriate information below:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brief Summary of Scope: (Limit to approximately 200 words or 1300 characters)

Name of the local or state League study/position with which your League is recommending concurrence:

Location of the local or state League study/position (usually a URL) with which your League is recommending concurrence:

#### 4. **No Recommendation**

After discussing the issues members have no changes to recommend at this time.

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## **Local Program Planning**

**Participation** in Local Program Planning is very similar to the National Program Planning, and will require some preparation as well:

- Find your *LWVSA Member Handbook* and then review the local positions.
- Come prepared with questions and/or discussion on those positions.

**Local Positions in Brief** (refer to Member Handbook for detailed information)

### **Natural Resources**

- Planning
- Pollution Prevention (Aquifer, Sewering, Solid Waste, Air)
- Transportation
- Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces (City & County Parks, Pools, Riverfront Park, Open Spaces)

### **Social Policy**

- Human Resources (Housing, Welfare, Day Care for School Age Children)
- Spokane County Health District
- Administration of Justice

### **Local Government**

- Municipal
- City and County
- Port District
- Local Citizen Participation in the Governmental Process
- Public Schools – Local

- Law Enforcement Accountability

**Process:** For local program planning members will be asked to:

1. **Keep/Revise/Drop** current position statements. Local Position Headings and Position Titles are listed above. Complete positions are in the *LWVSA Member Handbook*.

**Prioritize a Growth Management Topic.** In the past several years LWVSA has examined local perspectives based on the *2006 LWVWA Growth Management Study* -- Spokane's Urban Growth (2007), Transportation (2008) and Streets & Open Spaces (2009). For 2010 you are asked to prioritize the from among the following:

- Housing (this will need a focus)
- Environment (City of Spokane Mayor's Sustainability Task Force Report and actions)
- Shoreline Management (issues along the Spokane River)

This will be treated as a Review or Update. Please include names of interested volunteers!

2. **Suggest any new studies.** To propose a new study, please complete:

- Position Heading and Title:
- Scope:
- Outlook for Work (including individuals willing to work!)

### **Alternate method of Participation –**

Can't get to a unit? – individual members who submit responses will be considered together as a "unit-at-large." Please email responses to Ann Murphy: [ann\\_murphy@juno.com](mailto:ann_murphy@juno.com). Include in your email:

1. National Program Planning: Your choice of recommendation, with the appropriate information requested.
2. Local Program Planning: Your responses to questions 1, 2, and 3

*Compiled by Ann Murphy*