

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS – “LEAGUE LINGO”

ACTION - Steps taken to influence public policy consistent with League positions. Techniques used to achieve League goals include lobbying, legislative testimony, monitoring, public statements, media campaigns, public forums, coalitions and litigation.

ADVOCACY - Preferred term for action.

ANNUAL MEETING - A general meeting of the membership of a local League held once a year to make decisions affecting local League goals and operations. The annual meeting elects officers, amends bylaws and adopts a budget, local positions and studies.

BRIEFING - A training session held prior to unit meetings to prepare discussion leaders, resource persons and/or study committee members and others for presentation and discussion of the subject at units. “Briefing” is also used for meetings held to prepare for conventions, legislative interviews and ballot measure presentations.

CALL TO ACTION/ACTION ALERT - A carefully timed request from a national, state, ILO or local League board asking members to take action on behalf of a League position. A request for legislative action is known as a "call to action" by LWVC and an "action alert" by LWVUS.

COALITION - An action coalition is usually a temporary alliance (for the duration of a campaign) that brings together organizations for joint action toward a limited and well-defined goal. A coalition has a formal structure and established guidelines; member organizations are committed to action in the name of the coalition. In addition, organizations may form a voter service coalition or an information coalition to develop and exchange ideas and materials on their common goal.

CONCURRENCE - Substantial member agreement preferably reached through group discussion based on information presented by a study committee or through other methods of member response. Members are asked to concur, or agree with, a statement rather than to answer a question as with consensus. A concurrence statement may be a position held by another League or a decision statement recommended by a League board or study committee. The statement must be approved or rejected as written.

CONSENSUS - Substantial member agreement preferably reached through group discussion. Consensus is the sense of the group rather than a majority opinion. Discussion is based on information prepared by a study committee and is guided by consensus questions.

CONSENSUS QUESTIONS - Specific questions prepared by a study committee to stimulate interaction, focus discussion and facilitate conclusions by the group. Questions vary in style from open-ended to multiple choice. Questions are approved by the appropriate League board.

CONVENTION - A biennial meeting held by LWVC, LWVUS at which delegates make decisions affecting League goals and operations. The LWV of Los Angeles County holds an annual convention. The convention elects officers, amends bylaws, and adopts a budget, positions and studies.

COUNCIL - A biennial meeting of LWVC, LWVUS held between biennial conventions and attended by a small number of delegates (primarily League presidents or a representative). Council adopts a budget and provides delegates an opportunity to exchange ideas in a less formal setting than convention. In an emergency, council can adopt a study as provided in the bylaws.

COUNTY (LWV/LAC) - League of Women Voters of Los Angeles County.

DISCUSSION LEADER (DL) - The person who guides the deliberations at a League meeting. Usually a person trained to encourage maximum participation and exchange of ideas.

DUES - The annual fee required for membership in the League. The dues amount is set by each local League. (See Per Member Payment [PMP]).

DUPLICATE PRESIDENTS MAILING (DPM) - A service which provides the subscriber with most of the materials which are sent to League presidents.

EDUCATION FUND - The tax deductible “arm” of the League; this fund underwrites educational projects on a national level. State and local Leagues may deposit tax deductible contributions. These monies are disbursed back to the contributing League, upon application and approval, for educational purposes. Some local and state

Leagues have their own Education Funds.

ELECTION GUIDE (PROS AND CONS) - A concise, comprehensive explanation and pro/con arguments of the propositions on the state ballot published by LWVC in tabloid form. Local Leagues and ILOs purchase the Election Guide from LWVC and add their own ballot propositions.

EMERGENCY STUDY - A study of an issue of such a serious and urgent nature that members believe it must be dealt with before the next regular study adoption time. Bylaws spell out the procedures and circumstances under which such studies can be adopted.

GENERAL MEETING - A meeting to which all members are invited. The agenda may include outside speakers, presentation by a study committee, and information on positions and/or business matters. League business requiring member approval can be conducted only at general meetings.

ILO (INTER-LEAGUE ORGANIZATION) - A group of local Leagues with shared interests organized as a separate League to coordinate activities within a county, metropolitan area or region. ILOs hold conventions at which they adopt bylaws, elect officers and directors, choose studies and adopt a budget.

IN DEPTH - An expanded explanation of the propositions on the state ballot along with the main pro and con arguments. Published by LWVC as part of its voter service program. See Election Guide.

ISSUES COMMITTEE - A group of members interested in a public policy issue (such as human resources, local government, etc.) which meets periodically to follow developments; such members often served on the original study committee. They provide information to members at meetings and through bulletin articles, recommend action to the board, prepare statements and, when authorized, present testimony after approval of the board. (Sometimes known as an action committee.)

ISSUES FOR EMPHASIS - Timely and critical issues adopted by convention delegates on which League resources for study, action, and citizen education will be concentrated during the biennium.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES - Issues selected each year by the state board, in consultation with program and legislative directors, consultants, and the legislative advocate, for concerted League action in the Legislature.

LIMITED STUDY - A new study with a narrow scope and usually of short duration adopted by the convention or annual meeting.

LIVELY ISSUES - Current topics of interest presented to League members to stimulate discussion on possible new studies.

MEMBER AGREEMENT - Substantial agreement League-wide on a public policy issue. May be elicited through various decision-making techniques. Member agreement is an essential basis for establishing a position.

MEMBER SUPPORT - Action is approved by a League board only if the relevant position is believed to be understood and supported by members. Member opinion, when in doubt, may be elicited by phone calls, written questionnaire or discussion at meetings.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE (MAL) - A member of state and national League living in an area not served by a local League.

MEMBER-AT-LARGE UNIT (MAL UNIT) - A group of members-at-large in an area where it is not feasible to carry on the full range of local League activities, meets as a unit of the state League to discuss state and national program and provide voter service to the community. Organization of a MAL unit is approved by the state board and the unit functions under state board guidelines and supervision.

MONITORING - A form of action in which the League closely follows the administration of public policy and points out needed revisions in law, regulations or procedures.

NATIONAL (LWVUS) - League of Women Voters of the United States.

NETWORKING - An informal group of organizations meeting periodically to share information and strategies. In contrast with a coalition a network is relatively unstructured, with each member organization maintaining its own autonomy and acting in its own name.

NONPARTISANSHIP - The policy (as set forth in the bylaws) that the League, as an organization, does not support or oppose any candidate for office or political party. League members, however, are encouraged to

work as individuals for the political party or candidate of their choice. Each League board adopts its own nonpartisan policy which interprets for its members and the community any restrictions it places on the political activities of its board members.

OBSERVER - A League member who regularly attends meetings of governmental bodies for the sole purpose of listening (not speaking) and reporting back to the League.

PMP (PER MEMBER PAYMENT) - An annual assessment for each local League member that is paid (usually quarterly) by the local League to LWVC, LWVUS and, in some areas, an ILO.

PORTFOLIO - A specific responsibility carried by a board member or an off-board member such as voter service, finance, land use, etc.

POSITION - The stand of the League on a public policy issue and the basis for action. It includes a position summary as well as specific positions established through the study and consensus process. Positions are subject to regular review and the position summary must be readopted by the convention or annual meeting. The appropriate board approves and may act on a new position pending adoption by the convention or annual meeting. The League is said to "have a position," "act on a position," or "take a stand" (based on a position).

POSITION REVIEW - Participation by members, as a preparation for convention or annual meeting, in an evaluation of the League's current capacity to influence public policy. League positions at each level are reviewed for clarity, relevance and effectiveness. Review may result in proposals to the appropriate board to clarify or drop a position. Changing the substance of any position requires a new or updated study or concurrence process with a board recommended change accompanied by background material. Local League members may ask the appropriate board to undertake such a study or concurrence process if a position appears outdated or inconsistent with other positions.

POSITION SUMMARY - The official statement of League positions within each program area. The position summary is originally adopted and must be readopted thereafter by convention or annual meeting.

PRINCIPLES - The League's basic philosophy of government as adopted by the national convention that provides authorization for the adoption of League program. Because the principles are broad in scope, they are not usually used as the sole basis for action but can be used in conjunction with applicable League positions.

PROGRAM - Those governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action. League principles provide the authorization for the adoption of program.

PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING - Position review combined with consideration of a new study. Positions are evaluated (see POSITION REVIEW), and new studies may be proposed. Proposals made by the planning meeting are considered by the board and then submitted to the convention or annual meeting as either recommended or not recommended.

PROVISIONAL LEAGUE - A recognized group of members serving a probationary period to develop League knowledge and skills and is supervised by the state League board until LWVUS grants it local League status.

RECOMMENDED/NOT RECOMMENDED - A League board decides whether proposals made through the position review and new study consideration shall be submitted to the convention or annual meeting as "recommended" or "not recommended" by the board. Adoption of not recommended proposals may be covered by more stringent rules (see appropriate bylaws).

RECORDER - A League member who takes notes during the consensus discussions at meetings to reflect the majority and minority views expressed and to summarize areas of agreement.

RESOURCE PERSON - A knowledgeable member (often a study committee member) who provides impartial factual material to members, for discussion. A member serving as resource does not express his/her opinion on the subject so that members participating in the discussion can reach their own conclusions.

SCOPE - A definition of the limits of a study and possible areas of exploration. The scope is developed by the study committee and approved by the appropriate board.

SPEAKERS BUREAU - A group of members trained to present to the public pro and con ballot information, League action positions and topics of citizen information.

STATE (LWVC) - League of Women Voters of California.

STUDY - The process of gathering information for discussion by members with a view of reaching consensus

and establishing positions on a subject adopted by convention or annual meeting. Studies are conducted at all levels of League.

STUDY COMMITTEE - A group of local League members that meets regularly to carry out a current League study. The committee researches the subject, prepares the information for members, selects the material for presentation at meetings, determines how the material will be presented and serves as resource. The study committee analyzes recorders' reports and drafts consensus reports for the local board's approval. For local studies the committee develops the consensus questions and drafts positions for local board approval.

STUDY GUIDE - A League publication dealing with a current study prepared by a national, state or inter-League organization committee providing information and suggestions to assist local League study committees.

UNIT MEETING - A regularly scheduled meeting of a small group of members to obtain and discuss information. Study presentations and consensus discussions are usually held at unit meetings. Duplicate unit meetings are held at different times and locations to enable members to participate in small group discussions. Members attend the unit meeting most convenient for them. Very small Leagues may not have unit meetings but instead have one discussion meeting.

UPDATE - A study of limited scope approved by convention delegates to reevaluate an existing position in light of new information, changed circumstance and/or conflicts with another position, with a view to considering a position change. An update may be proposed by any local League through the position review process. Any new position resulting from an update must be approved by convention delegates. Local Leagues may also undertake an update of a local position.

VERTICAL POSITION - National, state or inter-League organization positions are designated as vertical if they may be used as the basis for action at lower levels of League without prior permission.

VOTER - The newsletter published by various levels of League; thus there is a local Voter, an LWV/LAC (county) Voter, an LWVC (state) Voter, and an LWVUS (national) Voter.

VOTER SERVICE/CITIZEN INFORMATION - A League service to help citizens improve their understanding of government and politics. To learn about registration and voting procedures, to become informed about candidates and their positions on issues and to obtain factual nonpartisan information about ballot issues.