

## **LWV of Juneau Board Handbook**

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**LWV Juneau**  
**Board Member Handbook – Part !**

**Item 1: Introduction and Purpose.**

Congratulations and welcome to the Board of directors of the **League of Women Voters of Juneau**. Your commitment to the LWV, your willingness to carry out its purposes, and your belief that citizens can make a difference are as important to your success as a board member, as is your ability to learn your position and do it well.

In order to maintain its status as a League of Women Voters, each local LWV is required to:

- **Have bylaws, the first three articles of which should be consistent with those of the LWVUS. The remaining articles must provide for democratic procedures.**
- **Establish and maintain a nonpartisan policy.**
- **Hold an annual business meeting of the membership.**
- **Hold regular board meetings.**
- **Meet its financial obligations (per member payment) to the state and national levels of the League and adopt a financial plan for sustainability and for carrying out the League's mission to its community.**
- **Have a plan for membership growth and retention that encourages a membership as diverse as the community.**
- **Advocate publicly in ways consistent with League principles, positions, and policies.**

The Handbook is your tool to ensure that you have the information necessary to carry out your responsibilities as a LWVJ Board member.

The Handbook is organized as a set of stand-alone Word documents (files). The most current version is maintained on the LWVJ Google Drive. The LWVJ Communications Chair and Secretary have access to the LWVJ Google Drive and Gmail account. (The President has a file with the login and password information for the Google and all other LWVJ online accounts.)

Primary responsibility for maintaining the Board Handbook lies with the Governance Chair, or Committee. If you find something that needs to be updated please mark up the page and send it to the Governance Chair/Committee.

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### Item 2: History of the LWV

In her 1919 address to the [National American Woman Suffrage Association's](#) (NAWSA) 50th convention in St. Louis, Missouri, President Carrie Chapman Catt proposed the creation of a “league of women voters to finish the fight and aid in the reconstruction of the nation.” A Women Voters group was formed within the NAWSA, composed of organizations in the states where suffrage had already been attained.

The next year, on February 14, 1920 – six months before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was ratified<sup>1</sup> – the League was formally organized in Chicago as the national League of Women Voters. Catt described the purpose of the new organization:

*“The League of Women Voters is not to dissolve any present organization but to unite all existing organizations of women who believe in its principles. It is not to lure women from partisanship but to combine them in an effort for legislation which will protect coming movements, which we cannot even foretell, from suffering the untoward conditions which have hindered for so long the coming of equal suffrage. Are the women of the United States big enough to see their opportunity?”*

Maud Wood Park became the first national president of the LWV. She had steered the women’s suffrage amendment through Congress. From the very beginning, however, it was apparent that the legislative goals of the LWV were not exclusively focused on women’s issues and that citizen education aimed at all of the electorate was in order.

Since inception, the LWV has helped millions of people become informed participants in government. The first LWV convention voted 69 separate items as statements of principle and recommendations for legislation. Among them were protection for women and children, rights of working women, food supply and demand, social hygiene, the legal status of women, and American citizenship.

During the postwar period, the LWV helped lead the effort to establish the [United Nations](#) and to ensure U.S. Participation. The LWV was one of the first organizations in the country officially recognized by the United Nations as a non-governmental organization.

**THE JUNEAU LWV:** In the fall of 1964 a meeting was announced in Juneau for those interested in starting a League of Women Voters. After attending that meeting a group was established to organize a League for Juneau, led by Shari Gross and then by Virginia Breeze. Official recognition of our LWV was given in March, 1967, when Kay Diebels was chosen as president following Ginny Breeze’s tenure.

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<sup>1</sup> Not all women could vote after the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment passed, however. Native American women were not granted citizenship until 1924, and the 24<sup>th</sup> amendment abolishing poll taxes and literacy tests was not ratified until 1964. Other barriers in federal and state law were used to prevent many women from voting.

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**Item 3. Mission and Core Values**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The goal of the LWV is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The LWV is organized to parallel the three levels of government: local, state and national. At each level, the League is governed by a volunteer President and Board of Directors.

Each local and state LWV:

- **builds** citizen participation in the democratic process.
- **engages** communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.
- **acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest** on key community issues at all government levels.

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**Item 4. LWV Principles**

The LWVUS Principles apply to all LWVs at state and local levels. These are broad concepts of government to which the LWV subscribes. They serve two functions:

- 1) Authorization for adoption of a program, and
- 2) The basis for taking action in conjunction with specific policy positions.

The Principles are found in *Impact on Issues* and on the LWVUS website at <http://lww.org/content/principles>. This link also explains where the Principles come from.

Because of their importance, the Principles are reprinted in this Handbook as follows:

*The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial.*

*The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.*

*The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education that provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.*

*The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.*

*The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems that affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies that facilitate the solution of international problems.*

*The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and that development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.*

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**Item 5. General Responsibilities of Board Members**

**Board Member Transition:**

After the Annual Meeting, every outgoing Board member should arrange a meeting with his/her replacement. Transfer the Board Handbook and go through it. Discuss files, documents, general duties, “how to’s”, deadlines, budget, projects/plans under way, community contacts and resources. Training on a one-to-one basis between the outgoing and incoming officer and director is vital.

**General Orientation and LWV Knowledge:**

- Be familiar with the contents in this Handbook, including *League Basics*.
- Be familiar with the current version of *Impact on Issues* by the LWVUS.
- Be familiar with the Tools on the LWVUS Management site, <http://forum.lwv.org>
- Be familiar with the information on the Juneau LWV website, <http://juneaulwv.org>
- Read your email and LWV documents sent to you.

**Plan your Specific Job (Portfolio)**

- Choose some jobs (portfolios) to be responsible for.
- Try to develop a committee to assist you - and to engage members and foster leadership development.
- Report to the Board plans made by you and/or your committee and request Board authorization to carry them out.
- Seek help from current or former Board members if you are struggling with something.
- Develop written material (checklists, how-to's, etc.) for your work if none exist. If they do, use and update them for your successor. Keep copies in this Handbook.
- Know your portfolio's budget. Develop a budget for your and your Committee's work for the upcoming year. Submit it to the Budget Committee according to the Board calendar.
- At the end of the year write up a brief report of what was done and accomplished for each job (portfolio), with a few lessons learned. Distribute to the Board and put a copy in Handbook.

**Board and Other Meetings**

- Plan to attend each Board meeting, to be on time, to participate in discussions, and to stay for the entire meeting. If you must miss a meeting, notify the President in advance.
- Notify the President and Secretary well in advance if you have an agenda item and how much time you need.
- Send out copies of written material ahead of time, and bring some copies to the Board meeting.
- Attend as many League functions and meetings as possible.
- Promote attendance at League functions on social media or with friends and neighbors.

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**Item 6. Board Meetings**

**Attendance:** The Bylaws specify (Article IV Section 3) that three consecutive unexcused absences from a Board meeting shall be deemed a resignation from the Board.

**General:** Board meetings should be efficient and members should feel that they are a good use of their time.

- Keep decision topics as narrow as possible.
- Focus on solutions, not problems.
- Be an active listener.
- Avoid interrupting, stray talk and/or repetition. Make comments and suggestions that build upon both the overall subject and what's previously been said.
- Set a time limit and stick to it.
- Always adjourn on time, even if that means scheduling a follow-up meeting.
- Five minutes before adjournment review to-dos assigned during the meeting and expectations before the next meeting.
- Make sure the Secretary captures accurate wording for each motion acted on.

**Agenda** The President prepares the Agenda which the Secretary emails to the Board and members several days ahead of the Board meeting. The order of the Agenda, typically, is as follows:

1. Roll call/determination of a quorum
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Review, correction, and approval of Minutes of previous meeting
4. Review of Treasurer's report(s)
5. Old business
6. New business
7. Reports of Committees (as needed)
8. Board member comments
9. Adjournment

**Procedures:** Discussion and voting procedures for the LWVJ Board is guided by Roberts Rules of Order for Small Boards (Under 12 members)<sup>1</sup>.

- Members raise their hands to be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
- A person making a motion states the wording clearly so that the Secretary can record it accurately. Bring complicated motions to the meeting in writing.
- Motions do not need to be seconded.
- Members may speak any number of times on any motion.
- Members may discuss any subject while no motion is pending.
- Unless they agree by unanimous consent, members vote by voice or by a show of hands as requested by the Chair.
- The Chair may enter into the discussion and may make motions and vote.

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<sup>1</sup> At the end of the Handbook is a one-page summary of Roberts Rules as they pertain to larger gatherings.

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**Item 7. New Board Orientation**

**Goals:** To ensure all Board members are “on the same page” with regard to:

- General expectations of Board members.
- Which Board members are responsible for what activities.
- A common understanding of general Board procedures.

**Process:** The first meeting of the new Board includes on the agenda an orientation and/or refresher on Board operations. This includes the following items:

- Introductions and brief “getting to know each other” by sharing personal information;
- Ensuring each Board member has a copy of this Handbook;
- A brief tour of the contents of the Board Handbook;
- A short review of LWV Best Practices (below);
- Decisions on the following:
  - A process for setting some LWVJ goals for the year;
  - Responsibility for collecting LWVJ mail from the PO Box;
  - Deciding which Board members will assume responsibility for which Job/project;
  - Determining if additional appointed Directors are needed to carry out the work of the LWVJ Board;
  - Updating the Board calendar for the coming year;
  - Setting a preliminary schedule of Board meeting dates and locations for the year.

**LWV Best Practices<sup>1</sup>**

- The League plans and evaluates its activities;
- The League maintains and grows its membership;
- New members receive a welcome package and attend an orientation session;
- The League produces a “Know Your Community” publication and updates it periodically;
- The League carries out citizen education and voter services activities;
- The League establishes policy positions through member participation and agreement;
- The League regularly communicates with its members including a bulletin (*Voter*) that is shared with Community leaders and potential members;
- The League operates with, and monitors performance of, an annual budget;
- The League sends representatives to state and national LWV meetings, and trainings;
- The League has an active Nominating Committee;
- The League has high visibility in its community.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from 1993 Guidelines issued by LWVUS



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**Item 8. Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is crucial to ensure the organization flourishes in the future.

The LWVJ Bylaws specify that:

- The Nominating Committee shall consist of four members and a Committee Chair including not more than two members of the current Board.
- The Nominating Committee Chair shall not be a current Board member.
- The two non-Board members and the Chair are all elected at the previous Annual Meeting.
- The two Board members are appointed by the Board.
- Nominations for the next Nominating Committee shall be made by the current Nominating Committee.
- Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors.
- Suggestions for nominations for Officers and Directors may be sent to the Committee by any voting member of the LWVJ.

The Board should designate its two members in time for the Committee's first meeting, preferably no later than the September Board meeting.

The Nominating Committee Chair should convene the Committee in the fall to plan and begin its work.

The Committee's job is find the path to build League leadership for the future. It has to develop a process for finding LWV members who want to do each Board job. The process must allow the best candidates to surface.

- Start early
- Decide what qualities you are seeking.
- Review the open Board seat job descriptions.
- Advertise the positions - use word of mouth, email, or social media to see if there are already good candidates.
- Don't forget to prepare a slate (Chair and 2 non-Board members) for the next Nominating Committee as well as for the vacant Board seats.
- The committee should promote Board service as an opportunity for personal growth.
- The Committee should be proactive, seeking those with particular skills including non-members.
- Nominating committee members should be familiar with how the Board operates.
- The Nominating committee is responsible to the membership, not to the Board.
- The Nominating committee presents a single slate of officers and directors to the annual meeting; The bylaws do, however, provide for nominations from the floor.

See also: <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/little-green-book-guide-leagues-nominating-committee>

Updated: 3/1/2018

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**Item 9. Generic Board Calendar**

April	New Board: Orientation and Assignments New Board: Planning – Set Goals and Calendar for Coming Year State Convention
May	Direction to National Convention Delegate(s)
June	National Convention/Council
July	File Biennial Corporation Report (odd years) PMP Payments due to LWVUS and LWVAK
August	File online IRS Form 990-N (ePostcard)
September	Designate two Board members to serve on Nominating Committee Membership renewals due
October	Annual Fundraiser Appoint Budget Committee Appoint Bylaws Committee
November	
December	Legislative and Holiday Reception
January	Program Planning
February	Call to Annual Meeting sent to all members with: Proposed Program Proposed Budget Proposed Bylaws Changes Proposed Board Officer and Director Slate Proposed (Next year) Nominating Committee Slate
March	Annual Meeting Adopt Program Adopt Annual Budget Adopt Bylaws Changes (if any) Elect Board Officers and Directors Elect Nominating Committee Direction to Board and Convention Delegates

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**Item 10. LWVJ Voter Service - Overview**

LWV Voter Service activities are multifaceted. They are designed to:

1. Encourage citizens to participate in the democratic process;
2. Educate citizens and others with information about our governmental processes;
3. Provide unbiased nonpartisan information on public issues which people can use as the basis for reaching their own decisions.

Voter Service activities are always kept clearly separate from LWV action and advocacy on LWV program issues. When civic or voter education involves material or forums on topics on which the LWV *does* have a position, the reader or attendee should not be able to “guess” the League’s position.

Voter Service activities of the LWVJ typically include the following:

- Voter registration drives.
- Publicizing information to the public about how to register and vote.
- Publishing Voters Guides and Candidate Questionnaires.
- Holding Candidate Forums.
- Collaborating with other groups to present Issue Forums.
- Providing speakers on election and other civic issues, such as election laws, voting procedures and ballot measures.
- Working with the school district to provide civic education to students.
- Collaborating with other groups and using social media to increase voting participation (Juneau Votes!).
- Providing speakers to explain the governmental process and issues.
- Presenting workshops on “How to Lobby” and “How to Run for Local Office.”

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## Item 11. LWVJ Program - Overview

### **League Program**

The LWVJ program consists of those governmental policy issues that the League has chosen for concerted study and action at the national, state or local levels.

Program has three parts: 1) selection of an issue (program planning); 2) investigation of that issue leading to consensus and formulation and then adoption of a position (program study); and 3) use of that position to influence public policy (action and advocacy).

The program process is specified in the bylaws and includes the following steps:

- Formal adoption by members at the annual meeting of an issue for study.
- Member study and agreement on broad concepts.
- Formulation of wording for a position by the board of directors.
- Action and advocacy as determined by the board of directors.
- Annual or biennial re-adoption of positions.

Local Leagues may work simultaneously on local, state, and national program issues. Occasionally, a League may choose to *adopt by concurrence* a position that was adopted after study and consensus by another local League.

The national League's positions on issues can be found in the publication *Impact on Issues* available on Amazon or can be read online on the LWVUS web site at <http://lwv.org/content/impact-issues-online-edition> (A full copy is provided at the end of the Handbook).

The LWV of Alaska positions are available on its website at <http://www.lwvalaska.org/positions-bylaws/>

The LWVJ Positions are on the LWVJ Website at <http://juneaulwv.org/advocacy/positions/> (A full copy is provided at the end of the Handbook).

### **League Principles:**

- These are broad “concepts of government” to which the LWVUS, and all state and local LWVs subscribe. The Principles are found in *Impact on Issues* and online through this link: <http://lwv.org/content/principles>. The Principles are summarized in Section 3 of this Handbook.
- The Principles can serve as a basis for support for: responsible, responsive, efficient, representative government; protection of the right to vote of every citizen; support for free public education; and international cooperation, for example.
- NOTE: since LWV Principles are broadly worded, caution should be used in applying them to specific policy issues.

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**Item 11a. LWVJ Program Planning**

The goal of annual program planning is to:

- Review/confirm that existing positions are still relevant; and
- Decide if a study should be undertaken on a new policy issue.

Members are asked for input into program planning through whatever means each local League chooses.

***New Studies:*** After receiving member input, the local Board reviews the suggestions received for new studies, and winnows them according to the following criteria:

- Does the proposed study fall within League Principles?
- Does the League already have positions that could be applied to this policy issue?
- Is government action needed – or possible – to address the issue?
- How much member interest has been expressed in this issue?
- Is this a crucial time for this issue?
- Do the political realities permit effective action?
- Is this the appropriate level of the League to address the issue?
- Will the League's involvement have an impact?
- Will the League's involvement increase the organization's influence and credibility?
- Will the League be able to collaborate with allies in taking action?

Based on these discussions, the Board decides what study recommendations to make to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

All recommended and not-recommended studies are forwarded to the members 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

***Existing Positions:*** After receiving member input, the local Board reviews the suggestions received for retaining, rewording, or dropping existing positions, and winnows them according to the following criteria:

- How old is the position?
- Is the position still relevant?
- Even if it is no longer relevant, should it be kept in reserve in case action is needed?
- Is the wording of the position still relevant or does it need to be updated?

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**Item 11b. LWVJ Program – How to Do a Study**

The goal of a study is to develop a position that will serve as the basis for action/advocacy on the policy issue.

The LWVJ is invited/expected to participate in national and state studies adopted by the LWVUS Convention and LWVAK Convention. However, LWVJ is solely responsible for conducting studies of local policy issues adopted by the its members at the Annual Meeting.

Information on the timeline and scope of State or National studies is sent out to local LWVs immediately after the State or National Convention. Additional guidance about how to participate in the study is sent from time to time to local LWVs.

For a local Study, the process runs as follows:

- The Board Appoints a Chair of the Study Committee.
- The Chair advertises and recruits members for the Committee.
- The Committee develops a scope and timeline for the study by:
  - Agreeing on the overall goal, the time, money and resources available;
  - Identifying experts and sources of information (groups, publications, etc.)'
  - Devising ways to get information to the members and the public on the issue;
  - Formulating questions for and methods for reaching member agreement (consensus)
- The Board approves the scope, approach, budget, and timeline for the study.
- The Committee conducts its research by doing interviews, reviewing documents, etc.<sup>1</sup>.
- The Committee produces a report of its research which is shared with the membership.
- The Committee finalizes consensus questions to put to LWVJ members at a meeting to determine if there is agreement on the policy issue.
- The Board approves the questions and forwards them to the membership and solicits member responses. This can be done either by:
  - Using a questionnaire, survey, etc., or
  - The Committee facilitates one or more membership meetings to discuss the questions. Careful notes are taken of the meeting and member comments.
- If it believes there is consensus, the Committee drafts the wording for a position.
- The Board reviews and adopts the position and sends it to the membership.
- Action to achieve the policy articulated in the position begins.

Studies should include the names of the committee members and the date approved. They should then be archived.

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<sup>1</sup>The LWVJ adopted a policy in 2003 that states *There should be at least two interviewers, and the interview report should be typed and returned to the interviewee for their review and initials if the material is to be published in any form, or if the interviewee requests it.* (See the Policy on Approval of Member Materials and Program.)

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**Item 11c. LWVJ Program – How to Update a Position**

Positions are reviewed during Annual Program Planning prior to the Annual Meeting where they are retained, dropped, or selected for an update.

Conditions change, goals are achieved or change, or Conventions at a higher level of LWV adopts positions that require a local LWV to bring their local position into conformity.

Once an Annual Meeting has acted to update a position the Board must determine what process it will follow, ensures that it does not change scope, decides who will lead (Chair) the effort, and suggest names of people to assist.

Typically, the process is as follows:

- An announcement is sent to the members that the position is going to be updated, and the reasons why.
- Interested members are asked to volunteer on the Committee which will come up with revised language for the position.
- The Committee reviews the old position statement and gathers information pertinent to updating the language.
- The Committee drafts a proposed change of wording and sends it to the Board.
- The proposed wording changes are sent to the membership for comments and feedback and with a notice of when the Board will take final action on the wording.
- The Board meets and discusses the Committee's wording, members comments and agrees on final wording (or sends it back to Committee).
- The approved changed wording is sent to the membership and replaces the prior wording on the LWVJ website.

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**Item 11d. LWVJ Program – How to Adopt a Position Through Concurrence**

Sometimes a neighbor League (A) completes a study and adopts a position that is relevant to another League (B). In such case, the League (B) may choose to accept League (A)'s position as its own through concurrence<sup>1</sup>.

Typically, the process is as follows:

- An announcement is sent to the members that the position is being considered for concurrence, and the reasons why.
- The Board solicits member responses. This can be done either by:
  - Using a questionnaire, survey, etc., or
  - The Board facilitates a membership meeting to discuss the position. Careful notes are taken of the meeting and member comments.
- If it believes there is agreement, the Board adopts the position, sends it to the membership, and posts it on the website.

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<sup>1</sup> Positions adopted by higher levels of LWV (state and national) flow automatically to the local LWVs in the state.



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### **Item 11e. LWVJ Program – Action and Advocacy**

LWVJ Advocacy/Action is based on policy positions arrived at after member study and agreement on the issues. Action is always based on a position at the local, state, or national level.

- **Action** (lobbying) is when a LWVJ submits a formal statement or testimony to a legislative body.
- **Advocacy** is broader and focuses on public education on a policy issue and includes such things as writing letters to media, public policy briefs, producing public forums, and encouraging members to act as individuals, etc.

#### **The following guidelines govern such activities:**

- All Action and Advocacy activities are approved by the Board, and recorded in the minutes with reference to the authorizing position.
- All Action letters are signed by the LWVJ President.
- LWVJ testimony to a legislative body is given by a knowledgeable person who is authorized to do so by the Board.
- Members testifying as individuals are not authorized to speak on behalf of the LWVJ unless approved by the Board. (This restriction is specified in the LWVJ Bylaws: Article IX, Section 4.)
- If Action or Advocacy is based on a state position, then a copy of the letter or statement, or description of the activity is sent to the state LWV president.

#### **Local Leagues Acting at the Federal Level<sup>1</sup>**

All action at the federal level must be authorized by the LWVUS board. This includes communicating with an elected or appointed official, joining a coalition, taking part in a press conference or rally, or writing a letter-to-the-editor.

The state/local League is asked to provide the following information in writing:

- the proposed action and the message to be conveyed.
- the LWVUS position on which the action is based.
- evidence that the issue is a priority for that state/local League.

If a local League is requesting permission to contact its U.S. Senator(s), it should also provide evidence that the action has been authorized by its state League

#### **Local Leagues Acting at the State Level**

A local LWV only takes action at the State level on a State position following a request from the State Board.

A local LWV takes action at the State level on a Local position only after approval by the State Board.

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<sup>1</sup> This does not apply to responses to LWVUS or LWVAK Action Alerts. NOTE: The requirement for LWVJ initiated federal action is taken from the LWVUS Publication, League Basics – see Section 5.