

# **Policies and Procedures of the League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon**

Policies and Procedures of the League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon as amended May 9, 2013.

## **Order for Policies and Procedures.**

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## **GENERAL POLICIES**

### **I. DEFINITION OF POLICY**

Policies as used here are procedures or practices that become established through experience and usage and are subsequently adopted as the best means of carrying out the purpose of the League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon as stated in its bylaws.

#### **BYLAWS – ARTICLE II Purposes and Policy**

Section 1. Purposes. The purposes of the League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government, and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Policy. The League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon may take action on local governmental measures and policies in the public interest in conformity with the principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States. The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

## **II. POLICIES REGARDING AUTONOMY OF LOCAL LEAGUES**

"Although the state board of Oregon as well as the national board of the League of Women Voters is willing to help, aid, advise a local League in any situation, the local League, by its very bylaws provisions, is an autonomous group. As long as the bylaws, recognition standards, or the purpose of the LWV are not violated, the local League is, so to speak, on its own. It may ask for help and suggestions; it may accept or reject suggestions. In no way is it obligated to follow them. The final decision is that of the local League." (From Mrs. Robert J. Phillips' letter as national president, October 1958).

## **III. NONPARTISAN POLICY**

Members: The nonpartisan principle of the League of Women Voters affects all members. The bylaws state that the League "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate". Every member should understand this is basic in the League's dealings with the public; however, League members, as individuals, are encouraged to participate in political parties and issues.

### Board Members:

- A. A member of the board may not be a candidate for public office during her/his term on the Board. If the member decides to be a candidate after accepting a Board position, she/he should resign at once and the League should see that statements explaining the resignation are immediately made public.
- B. President, Voters Service Chair and *Voters' Guide* Editor shall not take part in political campaigns either for candidates or for non-League issues. Limited financial support of candidates and non-League issues is permissible.
- C. Other Board members may participate in political campaigns for candidates or non-League issues provided that:
  1. The Board member exercises good judgment to preserve the League's commitment to non-partisanship; and
  2. The Board member clearly states to the campaign that she is participating as an individual and her/his involvement in no way conveys League endorsement; and
  3. The Board member does not accept a paid position with such campaigns; and
  4. The Board member does not take a leadership or public role with such campaign.
- D. No member of the Board shall hold any official position in any party during her/his term on the Board.
- E. Committee Chairs: Good sense and clear understanding of the League procedures and policies will guide individual members of the Board and committee chairs in most cases.

When situations arise unexpectedly or produce unprecedented complications, members of the Board and committee chairs should seek advice from the Board, or the Board should initiate discussion.

The Nominating Committee shall apprise all prospective Board members of the above-mentioned policies.

#### **IV. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee shall consist of the following persons:

- The President
- The three Vice-Presidents
- The Secretary
- The Treasurer, and the
- Editor of the monthly bulletin

They shall meet at least one week prior to the regular Board meeting. The Executive Committee shall keep written minutes of all their meetings, which will be available in the League office.

The Executive Committee shall act in an advisory capacity to the President. It shall assist the President in the following ways:

1. It may determine the agenda for regularly scheduled Board meetings.
  - a. It shall hear requests to initiate League Action in order to place these requests on the agenda.
  - b. It shall hear preliminary reports on upcoming general meetings, from the appropriate chair, in order to place the presentations on the agenda.
2. It shall advise the President whether to give or withhold consent for Action, in the Board's place, only when a decision on Action must be reached before the Board is scheduled to meet.

#### **V. ACTION**

Letters to the Editor: All letters to the editor concerning League positions shall be written by the President or a person designated by the President, and signed by the President. Unless the action is of an urgent nature, the proposal for the action and a draft of the testimony or letter to be presented should be brought to the Action Committee first, subject to "The Executive Committee", Section VII No. 2.

Testifying on League Issues: All testimony on League positions shall be made by the President or a person designated by the President, after consultation with appropriate resource persons.

Coalitions, Citizens Advisory Committees, Commissions, Task Forces and Cooperative Public Interest Groups: Members serving on such non-League committees must get Board approval before endorsing or supporting any action or position if the name of the League will be used in that endorsement. When speaking, members should distinguish between League positions and personal opinions.

## **VI. FINANCIAL CONTROLS**

Statement of Purpose: This section defines the roles of staff, officers, board members, and members in the control of moneys of the LWV of Portland and the LWV of Portland Education Fund to assure fiscal responsibility to our members, our supporters, and the public.

### Office Manager (#4. of performance review -- Maintains Financial Records)

- Is responsible for opening and categorizing invoices
- Checks valid charges on items where appropriate
- Passes all bills and invoices to the President
- Mails payments when checks are written and files paid invoices
- Prepares and makes deposits
- Passes deposit receipts on to the Treasurer
- Prepares a record of deposits specifying budget category for the Treasurer
- Prepares and sends thank you notes to contributors
- Passes thank you notes to the President for signature

### League President

- Scans all mail and bills or invoices delivered to the LWV office and maintains a log of donations
- Authorizes payment with date/fund/budget line/initials
- Notes timelines for Per Member Payments (PMP) and taxes
- Is an authorized signer on all accounts in absence or disability of the Treasurer
- Signs all thank you notes, tallies donations to forward to the Treasurer

### League Treasurer (Article V, Section 5 of Bylaws – Duties)

- Maintains records of all receipts/deposits, reconciles bank statements
- Makes payments of bills/invoices of approved expenses
- Is authorized as a single signer for checks (with the President as alternate signer)
- Maintains check register
- Prepares a monthly record of Regular and Education Fund checkbook activity for the Board
- Maintains and keeps current spreadsheets tracking “Budget v. Actual,” reports monthly to the Board
- Reports to the board at least quarterly and to the annual meeting
- Prepares materials for taxes, including payroll taxes
- Secures financial materials (check blanks, etc.) in locked cabinet in office
- Serves as an Ex officio member of the Endowment Fund Committee

### Development Chair

- Collects mail from post office box (NOTE: Enclosed envelopes for membership renewal and direct mail solicitation will have a PO Box address instead of the office address)
- Verifies donation checks for office manager and Treasurer
- Reviews bank statement, as requested

### Board of Directors

- Approves any adjustments to annual budget
- Monitors financial health of organization
- Reviews monthly record of checkbook activity
- Reviews spreadsheet of “Budget v. Actual”

- As requested, reviews tax returns

#### Endowment Fund Committee

- Oversees management of Endowment Fund and Sara Frewing Memorial Fund
- Implements policies of the Board and the membership
- Reports on Funds' status:
  - Annually to the membership at local convention
  - Quarterly to the Board of Directors
  - On an emergency basis to the Executive Committee
- As requested, reviews tax returns

### **VII. REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

Members may request full or partial reimbursement from general operating funds for actual expenses incurred in performance of their League duties, within the constraints imposed by the budget and with the president's approval.

- Telephone, postage, photocopying, essential supplies, and travel by means of public transportation will be reimbursed at actual cost. The least expensive means of transportation that is feasible shall be used. Travel by private car when necessary will be reimbursed at current Internal Revenue Service rates with parking fees reimbursed at actual cost.
- Meals will be reimbursed at a maximum of \$5 for breakfast, \$10 for lunch, and \$15 for dinner.
- Child care will be reimbursed at actual cost up to a maximum of \$25 per day.
- Other types of actual expenses may be reimbursed with board approval.

Those eligible to seek reimbursement shall submit vouchers and supporting documentation (receipts) to the League office within 30 days of incurring the expense. Vouchers should also be submitted for the expenses for which they are not requesting reimbursement (in-kind contributions). In-kind contributions may be documented at actual cost without regard to the limits established above for reimbursement, as long as the expenses are reasonable and customary.

The treasurer will reimburse within 30 days, and track and report reimbursements and in-kind contributions.

### **VIII. REACHING MEMBER AGREEMENT**

"Consensus" is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement, particularly for new or revised positions. Any consensus achieved by members through group discussion is not a simple majority vote nor is it unanimity. Consensus represents the overall "sense of the group" as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a single all-member meeting or a series of unit meetings.

An alternate decision technique, "concurrence" is the act of agreeing or concurring with a statement or position. Groups of League members or the Board of Directors may vote to concur with:

- Recommendations of a resource committee
- Decision statements formulated by League Boards at other levels
- Positions reached by another League

When the Portland League has approved a new study or update, the Board assembles a resource or study committee to investigate the topic and usually prepares a written report. After drafting its report, the resource or study committee will develop proposed consensus or concurrence questions, linked to the approved study scope, for the Board to review and approve. These questions form the framework for member discussion and potential League positions.

Prior to publication of the report, the Board will appoint an Editing Committee, consisting of at least two people not on the resource or study committee, to review the draft study report. Among other considerations, the Editing Committee will assess whether the draft report provides adequate information to support the consensus or concurrence discussions.

To prepare for the member agreement stage, study committee members compile material for Unit Leaders, including the consensus or concurrence questions, a response form, any additional background material, and a schedule for the process.

The Board appoints a Consensus Committee to include the Program or Member Education Vice President, the Study Committee Chair, one other member of the study committee, one other off-board member, and another Board member not directly involved with the study.

The Consensus Committee collects and analyzes the member responses, and formulates a proposed position statement for the Board. The Board reviews and acts on the proposal. Action may include approving the proposal as drafted, suggesting changes, or requesting further information. Once approved, the new position statement is published in the monthly newsletter, along with background information, including an explanation of how, why, and when the study was adopted, a brief summary of the study process, and a description of the consensus or concurrence process. The new position will be posted to the website and included in the next published version of local positions.

Note: Proposed studies or positions that affect jurisdictions covered by adjacent Leagues must be coordinated with those Leagues.

## **IX. POLICY FOR INTEREST GROUPS**

The purpose of this policy is:

- To provide a format, in addition to the traditional League committee structure, for League members to gather together, in the name of the League, around an area of interest related to League positions at the National, State or Local level for the purpose of learning and collaboration
- To provide a venue for bringing forward prospective issues for study or advocacy
- To ensure that interest group activities are consistent with League policies and programs, open to all members and publicized in the Voter

Interest groups shall operate under the auspices of the Member Education Portfolio, including budgetary considerations. All interest groups that wish to function “in the name of the League” shall present to the Board of Directors, through the Member Education Chair and prior to beginning their activities, a request to function under the auspices of the League of Women Voters of Portland. The request shall include:

- The name of the group

- A description of its purpose and anticipated activities

Each interest group shall renew annually the request to function under the auspices of the League of Women Voters of Portland. The request for renewal shall include a description of the group's activities and names of participating members.

## **X. PRIVACY POLICY**

Visitors to the website operated by the League of Women Voters of Portland will have their Internet Protocol ("IP") address and certain other data logged so that the League can compile statistics useful in managing and improving the site.

Anyone wishing to join the League email announcement list or to make a donation may be asked to provide additional contact information, such as name, street address, city, state, zip code, phone number, and email address.

Any donations made through the website will be processed by PayPal. The PayPal privacy policy is available at: [www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=p/gen/ua/policy\\_privacy-outside](http://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=p/gen/ua/policy_privacy-outside).

The League will not rent, sell, or trade visitors' email addresses or phone numbers with any third party. The League may, from time to time, share the name and mailing address of its non-member financial supporters with other nonprofit organizations, including the League of Women Voters of Oregon.

Individuals who want to review or correct their personal information may contact the League office. They may also request that the League withhold mailing information from any mailing list exchanges with other nonprofit organizations.

## **XI. DIVERSITY POLICY**

The League of Women Voters of Portland, Oregon, in both its values and practices, is committed to inclusion and diversity. This means that there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of economic position, gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability.

We recognize that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making. We believe inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

We affirm our commitment to reflecting the diversity of the Portland League.

## **EDUCATION FUND POLICIES**

### **I. SARA FREWING MEMORIAL FUND POLICY**

The Sara Frewing Memorial Fund is a part of the Education Fund and can only be used for voter service projects. Voter service projects/activities are those that are directly related to elections such as:

- Voter Registration
- Voters' Guide
- Candidate debates and ballot measure forums and any recordings of those events
- Room rentals for candidate or ballot measure forums
- Speakers bureau for ballot measures
- Directory of Elected Officials
- Administrative salary for voter election projects
- Other, as decided by the board.

Activities not related to an election are not eligible for funding from the Sara Frewing Memorial Fund, including:

- General Meetings on issues not directly related to an election; recording and broadcast fees for these meetings
- State of Oregon Voters' Pamphlet statements

### **II. RECORDING OF LEAGUE MEETINGS**

The League may invite members of the recognized, professional media, including community cable services, to record or videotape an educational meeting as a way of sharing information with a wider audience. The meeting organizers will inform meeting participants of any planned recording as part of the invitation.

Other members of the general public may record or videotape a League meeting, providing that:

- The recorder has requested approval from the League President or Vice President, preferably at least 24 hours prior to the meeting
- All participants have given permission to be taped
- The recorder guarantees that the material will be aired with no editorial changes that alter the substance or context of the program

### **III. POLICY ON SPONSORSHIP OF PUBLIC DEBATES AND OTHER CANDIDATE FORUMS**

The purpose of any candidate debate forum shall be to provide an opportunity for public education on the candidates for public office. The League may propose to sponsor a candidate debate or public forum for any election.

The Board of Directors shall make the final determination on whether to hold a proposed candidate debate or public forum. In reaching this decision the Board shall take into consideration the following factors:



1. All candidates who have officially filed for a public office have received formal notification of the proposed debate or forum;
2. The League made every feasible effort to accommodate the schedules of all candidates;
3. The League has ascertained whether additional or alternative opportunities will be provided for the public to hear the candidates speak; and
4. The effort to arrange and hold a public debate or candidate forum does not place an undue burden on the League in terms of human, financial, or political resources.

If a candidate declines to participate in a debate, leaving a single candidate to be heard, the Board shall select an alternative format that would permit maximum public information. For example, the League could adopt a question-and-answer format instead of allowing the participating candidate to make a presentation.

#### **IV. CANDIDATE PARTICIPATION POLICY FOR CANDIDATE FORUMS FOR THE OFFICE OF MAYOR OF PORTLAND**

Candidate forums or debates sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Portland Education Fund (“the League”) at election time are held to provide an opportunity for thoughtful discussion of important public issues by candidates who have demonstrated significant voter interest and might therefore be elected. The League also seeks to stimulate voter interest and participation with these events.

Before 2012, it had been the unwritten policy of the League to invite all candidates who have filed for the office of Mayor of Portland to participate in the League’s candidate forum for that office.

However, when, in the good faith judgment of the League, the number of candidates who have filed for the office of Mayor of Portland defeats the above-stated purposes of the forum and makes informed choice among the candidates impossible in the limited time of a candidate forum, the League will select the candidates it will invite to participate in the forum using the following criteria.

A candidate may participate in a forum for the office of Mayor of Portland if he or she meets the following criteria:

1. **Eligibility to be on the Ballot:** The candidate must have filed on time for office with the City of Portland Auditor’s Office Elections Division.
2. **Viable campaign:** The candidate must have
  - a. established a Principal Campaign Committee with the Oregon Secretary of State, Elections Division;
  - b. a campaign treasurer;
  - c. filed required contribution and expenditure reports with the Oregon Secretary of State, Elections Division;
  - d. a telephone number listed under the campaign’s name; and
  - e. a campaign website and/or other campaign material with the candidate’s articulated views on issues.
3. **In addition, the candidate must meet at least one of the following criteria:**

- a. The candidate has received 5 percent or more of the vote, in a professionally conducted independent public opinion survey conducted by an experienced political pollster based on a scientific sample of the entire electorate with a margin of error of less than 5 percent (at a 95 percent level of confidence), if such a public opinion survey is available.
- b. The candidate has reported in legal documents filed with state or city government entities the receipt of at least one campaign contribution per 5,000 residents of the constituency (based on the total number of persons enumerated in the last U.S. census), excluding contributions from the candidate himself or herself, the candidate's spouse, or the candidate's natural or adopted children. Contributions do not have to be from residents of the constituency to be counted.
- c. The candidate previously has been elected to, or has held, the office that he or she seeks.
- d. The candidate sought the same office during the previous eight years and received at least 10 percent of the vote in the general election.

For candidates who have not met one of the criteria listed in item 3 above, the League may consider other factors, as demonstrated by a candidate. Some such factors include issuance of press releases describing the candidate's position(s) on issues; media interviews of the candidate regarding the candidate's position on issues(s); endorsements sought by the candidate; endorsements received by the candidate; public appearances before groups of voters for the purpose of describing the candidate's position(s) on issues; the candidate's history of active involvement in issues of city government.

In all cases, the League will use its good faith judgment in determining whether or not a candidate has demonstrated significant voter interest and support.

The League will reserve the right to determine that the above criteria have been met.