

LWV-WA Action and Advocacy Policy

October 2018

Definition: Action includes both advocacy and lobbying. **Lobbying** is an attempt to influence **specific** legislation, either proposed or already introduced. LWV-VA has an official lobbyist who is given authority to speak on behalf of the state league.

However, members of local Leagues can advocate for an issue(s). **Advocacy** consists of activities that educate legislators on particular issues which affect their members and helping them find solutions to persistent problems. When League members visit legislators, they need to indicate that they are expressing their views as individuals and not officially representing the League.

Examples:

Advocacy

- Telling your member of Congress how a federal grant your organization received has helped your constituents.
- Educating a member of General Assembly about the effects of a policy on your constituency.

Lobbying

- Asking your member of Congress or the General Assembly to vote for or against, or amend, introduced legislation.
- Emailing a “call to action” to your members urging them to contact their member of Congress in support of action on introduced legislation or pending regulations.

Preparing materials or organizing events in support of lobbying activities

Why Does Advocacy Matter?

When done effectively, advocacy influences public policy by providing a conduit for individuals and organizations to voice an opinion.

These efforts can, in turn, sway public opinion, garner press coverage, and ultimately provide policymakers an opportunity to respond to constituents' needs.

Roles and Responsibilities – LWV-WA Action and Advocacy Coordinator (AAC) and Coordinator Chairs (CC)

1. Action/Advocacy

- a. Identifies needs for action/advocacy by monitoring newspapers, websites, e-newsletters, observer reports, etc. (AAC and CC)
- b. Prepares and presents action/advocacy proposals for board approval (AAC)
- c. Coordinates action/advocacy campaigns (AAC)
- d. Prepares and issues “Calls to Action/Advocacy” for members via appropriate channels including: (AAC and CC)
 - i. Email and/or constant contact
 - ii. Facebook
- e. Encourages members to take action/advocate as individuals (AAC and CC)
- f. Prepares statements, letters, news articles, panel discussion etc. and works with PR chair or appropriate board members on distribution (CC)
- g. Attends LWV-VA meetings in Richmond, as able, and encourages LWVWA members to attend: (AAC and CC)
 - i. Pre-session Roundtable meeting, usually the first Wednesday in December.
 - ii. Women’s Legislative Roundtable meetings, usually every Wednesday during the legislative session.
 - iii. League Lobby Day, usually the first Wednesday in February
 - iv. Scheduling meetings with legislators
- h. Coordinates LWVWA testimony to the JCC County General Assembly Delegation (AAC)
 - i. Suggests items to be included in president’s testimony and prepares or assists with writing the testimony.

- 2. State-wide Action/Advocacy** - Identifies needs for action/advocacy in the following ways:

- a. Reviews LWV-VA website on a periodic basis (more often during the General Assembly session) for items that LWVVA should take action on or members should be informed about. (AAC and CC)
- b. Monitors Legislative Information System (LIS) and Richmond Sunlight and other appropriate media outlets. (AAC and CC)
- c. Tracks legislation on the Virginia General Assembly website to determine action opportunities. (AAC and CC)

3. Public Outreach - Coordinators and committee members should:

- a. Convene panel discussions open to members and the general public about issues such as but not limited to election integrity, education, gun reform and redistricting.
- b. Identify speakers with expertise in the above issues or other issues.
- c. Use video resources to enhance public understanding of the above issues or other issues.