

# Local League Handbook

*Vital Information for League Members in Texas*

Revised 2018

League of Women Voters of  
Texas League of Women Voters of Texas Education  
Fund



League of Women Voters® of Texas

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For League use only.

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# About the League

## Mission

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

## Vision

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

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

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization which:

- builds citizen participation in the democratic process
- studies key community issues at all governmental levels in an unbiased manner
- enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

We believe in:

- respect for individuals
- the value of diversity
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities

We will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

## Principles

The League Principles are concepts of government to which all Leagues subscribe. They are the beliefs shared by League members everywhere. Principles are the basis upon which national, state, and local program is adopted. The Principles themselves may be used to take action at any level of government. However, because they are broad statements, such action is usually taken in conjunction with current League positions. Additional information on their usage is found in Impact on Issues. The League of Women Voters believes:

- in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.
- that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

### **Nonpartisanship Policy**

“The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. Any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.”

Please print the nonpartisanship policy stated above in combination with our mission statement on all your voters service publications, such as *Voters Guides*, candidate forum programs, and elected officials guides. In addition, all local Leagues should adopt a nonpartisan political policy statement and review/update it annually. It should outline the limitations for political activities for various board positions. Local League nonpartisan policies vary based on their own communities. For the policy of the state board, see the LWVTX Nonpartisan Political Policy, Section 1.1, in [\*Policies and Procedures: A Manual for State & Local League Boards\*](#) found on the publications page of the state website.

## Communication

### **LWVUS**

- 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 1000 | Washington, DC  
20036-4508 Phone 202-429-1965 | Fax: 202-429-0854
- Website: [LWV.org](http://LWV.org)
- Facebook: [@leagueofwomenvoters](https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters)
- Twitter: [@lwv](https://twitter.com/lwv)
- [Instagram](#)
- Contact Information for [LWVUS Leadership and Staff](#)
- email staff: <first initial + last name@lwv.org>
- LWVUS [League Management Site](#) provides resources & tools to help your League empower voters & help Make Democracy Work in your community.

## LWVTX

### State Office

- The state office is the best source to get answers to your questions.
- 1212 Guadalupe St., Suite 107 | Austin, TX 78701-1800
- Office hours: 9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday
- 512-472-1100
- Email: [LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org](mailto:LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org)
- Website: [www.LWVTexas.org](http://www.LWVTexas.org)

### President and Treasurer

- The president and the treasurer can also be reached by [email](#) via the LWVTX website.

### Issue Chairs

- Issue chairs are named on their issue page under [Advocacy & Issues](#). Contact the issue chair by email on the issue page *or* through the state office.

### Communicating with Local Leagues

[Find a Local League](#) Contact information for local Leagues

[Calendar–Local League](#) for dates and events pertinent to local League

### Social Media & Websites

- [Social Media & Website Resources](#): Increase the visibility of your League and the League's mission online with social media.
- [Policies and Procedures: A Handbook for State & Local League Board](#) LWVTX policies related to websites and social media for found in Sections 1.8

## Program; League Study & Advocacy

Local Leagues start each year with goal setting, calendar planning, and board orientation. If you need help, Service to Local Leagues provides coaches who are experienced League members to provide consultation, training and facilitation to help you meet your local goals. Contact the state office for more information.

### Special help is also available in the following places:

- [LWV.org](http://LWV.org) National League website
- [LWVTexas.org](http://LWVTexas.org) State League website

### Find where the League stands on issues

- [Impact on Issues](#) LWVUS program positions
- [Program Perspectives](#) or LWVTX [positions page](#)

- [We Support](#) LWVTX program positions in brief
- [Advocacy & Issues](#) LWVTX web pages

Issue chairs serve off-board, monitor bills and take action at the state level. Based on League positions and with support of the advocacy chair and president Issue Chairs they may choose to support or oppose bills. LWVTX report on their work in our [Capitol Action Report](#) and on the website during the session.

### **Taking Action: Guidelines for Local Leagues**

*The president of the League at all three levels is the official spokesperson for the League. The president may delegate this responsibility on an individual basis, as the president deems necessary.*

### **A Definition of League Action**

Action is League effort to bring about governmental change based on the positions we derive through member study and consensus. Because we are a multilevel organization with positions at each level, we must

- coordinate our action efforts in order to speak with one voice, and
- choose issues for priority attention at all levels in order to allocate resources effectively and maximize political impact.

### **Advocacy & Lobbying Using Local, State, and National Positions**

- *Local positions.* Local positions are used to lobby at the local level. Only in unusual circumstances and with preclearance from the state League president is a local position used to lobby at the state or national level.
- *State and national positions.* Applicable state and national positions may be used to lobby at the local level without clearance from the state or national level.

Unsure about what action to take? Please contact the appropriate LWVTX issue chair via the that issue page in [Advocacy & Issues](#) or contact the state office by email at [LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org](mailto:LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org) or call 512-472-1100.

### **Action Guidelines for All Leagues**

- Leagues act only when we have a local, state, or national position or are acting under League principles.
- Leagues never lobby in opposition to a League position.
- Elected officials respond best to their own constituents. Therefore, lobby only your own representatives unless otherwise directed.
- Invite your elected officials to a "Meet the League" get-together.
- Distribute *We Support*, a brochure of issues that the LWVTX will support during the current Texas legislative session found on the [publications page](#) of the website.
- Visit your legislator between sessions. Get acquainted.
- Organize a local League advocacy workshop.
- Conduct the legislative interviews sent to local Leagues by LWVTX.

- For guidance and inspiration, read found on the [publications page](#) of the website.
  - *Fundamentals for Local Leagues*
  - *Program Perspectives*
  - *Impact on Issues*

**Before Taking Action on an Issue, Ask Yourself**

- Under what position do you wish to act—local, state, national? Or the League Principles?
- What do you wish to accomplish?
- Who is authorized to act for your League?
- Will state, national, or other local Leagues be affected by this action?
- Is authorization needed from LWVTX, LWVUS, or other local Leagues before you act? (See guide on next page.)
- Who should receive copies of your letter, testimony, etc.?
- How can my League promote the action to get the best response from the community—letters to the editor, social media, website, email?

**When You Initiate Action**

Action you initiate often requires contacting officials shared with other Leagues. Occasionally, you may wish to contact officials other than your own. For these reasons, authorization from other local Leagues is often necessary when you initiate action. For example:

- LWV-Houston Area wants to testify before a state legislative committee holding a hearing in Houston on land use and critical areas protection. They believe this is a good opportunity to advocate the League’s state land use positions. After authorization by LWVTX, they are ready to act.
- LWV-Tarrant County wants to appear before the North Central Texas Council of Governments on a regional issue. After consulting other Leagues in the region, they speak at the Council of Governments meeting.

When your League wants to initiate action on its own behalf, use the action guide that follows. If you do not find your needs addressed, contact the appropriate LWVTX issue chair via that issue page in *Advocacy & Issues* at <https://my.lwv.org/texas/league-advocacy> or contact the state office by email at [LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org](mailto:LWVTexas@LWVTexas.org) or call 512-472-1100.

|   |
|---|
| <b>Action Guide: What to Do When Your Local League Initiates Action before a . . .</b>  |
| <b>Local government or official in your League area only</b> (E.g., city council, mayor, planning commission, school board)   |
| ✓ A local League board decision   |
| <b>Regional agency or official which is shared with other local Leagues</b> (E.g., common city government or special purpose district, council of governments, regional task force) |

|   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A local League board decision</li> <li>✓ Requires authorization from other local Leagues affected by this action</li> </ul>  |
| <b>State government or official</b> (E.g., state representative or senator, governor, state agency)   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A local League board decision</li> <li>✓ Requires authorization from LWVTX advocacy committee chair or president</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Federal government or official</b> (E.g., member of Congress, federal agency, U.S. President)  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A local League board decision</li> <li>✓ Requires authorization from LWVTX advocacy committee chair or president</li> <li>✓ Requires authorization from LWVUS</li> </ul> |

### Advocacy

- Generally, local Leagues advocate to local officials, the state League advocates to state officials, and the national League advocates to national officials.
- A local League president, board member, or member cannot advocate officially for the League to a state or national official without authorization from LWVTX or LWVUS.
- A local League board member or member cannot advocate officially for the local League without authorization from the local League president. League members generally advocate for issues supported by the League as private citizens—not mentioning the League.

### Action Alerts

There are two sources of action alerts: LWVTX and LWVUS. Action in response to these requests is expected and does not require authorization. An action alert means your League’s help is critically needed. Leagues are expected to respond to action alerts. Action alerts provide specific instructions.

- LWVTX action alerts are sent to all local League members via Action News, Capitol Action Report and Social media. Action Alerts are also placed on the website and contain information on state legislation or governmental actions and suggestions for action to be taken.
- LWVUS actions are sent via email, social media and are placed on the website. Actions provide suggestions for congressional action to be taken.

### Who speaks for the League

- *Local League president.* The president of the local League answer the action alerts in the name of the local League.
- *Member action.* The president (or designee) encourages local League members (via email, social media, website) to take action.
  - League members are encouraged to mention their membership.
  - Members should share the information on their own social media platforms. The effectiveness of action by local Leagues is bolstered by action that League members and local residents undertake as individuals.

# Legislative Districts of Local Leagues

- Local Leagues that share districts should coordinate with each other when preparing *Voters Guides*, debates, interviews, or similar projects.
- For each shared district each League shall coordinate efforts and agree upon voter’s guide contents including background items, number and content of questions, length of answers.
- There should only be one set of questions for each district for VOTE411.org!
- The districts listed are current as of the date of publication.

## Counties

| <i>Local League</i>  | <i>Counties in Catchment Area</i>                        |
|----------------------|--|
| LWV-Amarillo         | Potter, Randall  |
| LWV-Austin Area      | Travis, Williamson                                       |
| LWV-Bay Area         | Galveston, Harris  |
| LWV-Beaumont         | Jefferson  |
| LWV-Collin County    | Collin   |
| LWV-Comal Area       | Comal, Guadalupe   |
| LWV-Corpus Christi   | Nueces   |
| LWV-Cy-Fair          | Harris   |
| LWV-Dallas           | Dallas   |
| LWV-Denton           | Denton   |
| LWV-El Paso          | El Paso  |
| LWV-Fort Bend County | Fort Bend  |
| LWV-Grayson County   | Grayson  |
| LWV-Hays County      | Hays   |
| LWV-Hill Country     | Kerr, Gillespie, Kimble, Edwards, Real, Bandera, Kendall |
| LWV-Houston Area     | Fort Bend, Harris  |

|                              |                |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| LWV-Irving                   | Dallas         |
| LWV-Lavaca County            | Lavaca         |
| LWV-Lubbock County           | Lubbock        |
| LWV-Marshall/Harrison County | Harrison       |
| LWV-Midland                  | Midland        |
| LWV-Richardson               | Dallas, Collin |
| LWV-Rio Grande Valley        | Cameron        |
| LWV-San Antonio Area         | Bexar          |
| LWV-Tarrant County           | Tarrant        |
| LWV-Tyler/Smith County       | Smith          |
| LWV-Victoria                 | Victoria       |
| LWV-Waco Area                | McLennan       |
| LWV-Wichita Falls            | Wichita        |

### **Congressional Districts**

Resources

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Directory of U.S. Representatives</a> | District #, name with link to website, party, room/office building, telephone, committee assignment   |
| <a href="#">Maps of Congressional Districts</a>   | Statewide map, individual district map  |
| <a href="#">Who Represents Me?</a>                | Enter address to obtain current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education |

### **Local League Congressional Districts**

*District #    Local League*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Marshall/Harrison County, Tyler/Smith County |
|---|--|

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 2  | Houston Area, Cy-Fair  |
| 3  | Collin County, Dallas, Richardson                                    |
| 4  | Collin County, Grayson County  |
| 5  | Dallas   |
| 6  | Tarrant County   |
| 7  | Houston Area, Cy-Fair  |
| 8  | Houston Area   |
| 9  | Houston Area, Fort Bend County                                       |
| 10 | Austin Area, Houston Area, Cy-Fair                                   |
| 11 | Midland  |
| 12 | Tarrant County   |
| 13 | Amarillo, Wichita Falls  |
| 14 | Bay Area, Beaumont   |
| 15 | Comal Area, San Antonio Area   |
| 16 | El Paso  |
| 17 | Austin Area, Waco  |
| 18 | Houston Area   |
| 19 | Lubbock County   |
| 20 | San Antonio Area   |
| 21 | Austin Area, Comal Area, Hays County, Hill Country, San Antonio Area |
| 22 | Houston Area, Fort Bend County                                       |
| 23 | El Paso, San Antonio Area  |
| 24 | Dallas, Irving, Tarrant County                                       |
| 25 | Austin Area, Hays County   |

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 26 | Denton, Tarrant County                                 |
| 27 | Corpus Christi, Victoria, Lavaca County                |
| 28 | San Antonio Area                                       |
| 29 | Houston Area   |
| 30 | Dallas   |
| 31 | Austin Area  |
| 32 | Collin County, Dallas, Richardson                      |
| 33 | Dallas, Irving, Tarrant County                         |
| 34 | Rio Grande Valley                                      |
| 35 | Austin Area, Comal Area, Hays County, San Antonio Area |
| 36 | Houston Area   |

### State Senate Districts

Resources

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Directory of Texas State Senators</a> | Sorted by name and district; link to website  |
| <a href="#">Maps of Texas Senate Districts</a>    | Statewide map, individual district map  |
| <a href="#">Who Represents Me?</a>                | Enter address to obtain current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education |

### Local League State Senate Districts

*District #    Local League*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Marshall/Harrison County, Tyler/Smith County |
| 2 | Dallas                                       |
| 3 | Houston Area                                 |
| 4 | Houston Area, Beaumont                       |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Austin Area   |
| 6  | Houston Area  |
| 7  | Houston Area, Cy-Fair   |
| 8  | Collin County, Dallas, Richardson   |
| 9  | Dallas, Irving, Tarrant County  |
| 10 | Tarrant County  |
| 11 | Bay Area, Houston Area  |
| 12 | Denton, Tarrant County  |
| 13 | Houston Area, Fort Bend County  |
| 14 | Austin Area   |
| 15 | Houston Area  |
| 16 | Dallas, Irving, Richardson  |
| 17 | Houston Area, Fort Bend County  |
| 18 | Houston Area, Victoria, Corpus Christi, Lavaca County, Fort Bend County   |
| 19 | San Antonio Area  |
| 20 | Corpus Christi  |
| 21 | Austin Area, Hays County, Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio Area, Comal Area |
| 22 | Tarrant County, Waco  |
| 23 | Dallas  |
| 24 | Austin Area, Hill Country   |
| 25 | Austin Area, Comal Area, Hays County, San Antonio Area                    |
| 26 | San Antonio Area  |



|         |                   |              |                          |
|---------|-------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 12      | Waco              | 71 – 72      | –                        |
| 13      | Lavaca County     | 73           | Comal Area, Hill Country |
| 14-16   |                   | 74           | –                        |
| 17      | Austin Area       | 75 – 79      | El Paso                  |
| 18 – 19 | –                 | 80 – 81      | –                        |
| 20      | Austin Area       | 82           | Midland                  |
| 21-22   | Beaumont          | 83 – 84      | Lubbock County           |
| 23-24   | Bay Area          | 85           | Fort Bend County         |
| 25, 29  |                   | 86 – 87      | Amarillo                 |
| 26-28   | Fort Bend County  | 88           | –                        |
| 30      | Victoria          | 89           | Collin County            |
| 31      | –                 | 90 – 99      | Tarrant County           |
| 32 & 34 | Corpus Christi    | 100          | Dallas                   |
| 33      | Collin County     | 101          | Tarrant County           |
| 35 – 36 | –                 | 102          | Dallas, Richardson       |
| 37 – 39 | Rio Grande Valley | 103          | Dallas, Irving           |
| 40 – 43 | –                 | 104          | Dallas                   |
| 44      | Comal Area        | 105          | Dallas, Irving           |
| 45      | Hays County       | 106          | Denton                   |
| 46 – 52 | Austin Area       | 107 –<br>111 | Dallas                   |
| 53      | Hill Country      | 112          | Dallas, Richardson       |

|         |                |                      |                                    |
|---------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 54 – 55 | –              | 113 –<br>114         | Dallas                             |
| 56      | Waco Area      | 115                  | Dallas, Irving                     |
| 57 – 61 | –              | 116 –<br>125         | San Antonio Area                   |
| 62      | Grayson County | 126–135,<br>137- 150 | Houston Area<br>(Cy-Fair 130, 135) |
| 63 – 65 | Denton         | 136                  | Austin Area                        |

### State Board of Education Districts

Resources

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Directory of Board of Education Members</a> | Sorted by district; link to biography   |
| <a href="#">Maps of Board of Education Districts</a>    | Statewide map, individual district map  |
| <a href="#">Who Represents Me?</a>                      | Enter address to obtain current districts and members of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, the Texas delegation to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and the State Board of Education |

### Local League State Board of Education Districts

*District #      Local League*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | El Paso  |
| 2 | Corpus Christi, Rio Grande Valley, Victoria                          |
| 3 | San Antonio Area, Lavaca   |
| 4 | Houston Area, Fort Bend County                                       |
| 5 | Austin Area, Comal Area, Hays County, Hill Country, San Antonio Area |
| 6 | Houston Area, Cy-Fair  |
| 7 | Bay Area, Houston Area, Beaumont, Fort Bend County                   |

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 8  | Bay Area, Houston Area                                       |
| 9  | Marshall/Harrison County, Grayson County, Tyler/Smith County |
| 10 | Austin Area  |
| 11 | Dallas, Irving, Tarrant County                               |
| 12 | Collin County, Dallas, Richardson                            |
| 13 | Dallas, Irving, Tarrant County, Richardson                   |
| 14 | Denton, Waco   |
| 15 | Amarillo, Lubbock County, Midland, Wichita Falls             |

## LWV Texas Education Fund (LWVTEF)

### About the Education Fund

#### Mission

The League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund, a nonpartisan organization, encourages active and informed civic participation in government and increased understanding of major public policy issues.

#### What is LWVTEF?

The LWVTEF is a public trust established under Texas law, an organization legally separate from the League that performs citizen education and voters service activities. Contributions to the Education Fund can be deducted as charitable contributions, whereas contributions to the League cannot. Local Leagues can maintain a LWVTEF account in order to be able to solicit tax-deductible donations from their local donor base.

Two publications available on the [publications page](#) provide additional information about the education fund for local Leagues and its board of trustees:

- *Handbook for Local League TEF Projects* (Provides policies, procedures, and forms)
- *Trustees Handbook for the Education Fund*

#### How Can Local League TEF Money be Used?

All voters service activities would qualify—*Voters Guides*, *Guides to Elected Officials*, Know Your Community Surveys, voter registration campaigns, general get-out-the-vote campaigns, and educational projects on program studies. According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the projects must satisfy all of the following criteria:

- Be in the general area of government and public policy
- Be purely educational in nature and present all major sides fairly
- Be factual with no conclusions drawn from the facts
- Not duplicate the efforts of another organization
- Be of value to the public

In addition, Education Fund money may be used to

- attend educational workshops and conferences that meet IRS criteria,
- purchase LWVTEF and LWVUS Education Fund publications,
- make per member payments to LWVUS (50% of annual national PMP) and LWVTX (50% of annual state PMP), and
- contribute to specific state projects within the LWVTEF.

## Essential Checklist: What to Send to Whom

*Information That Local Leagues Provide to the State and National Leagues*

A written record of local activity is very important because these documents can become models or sources of ideas for other local Leagues and future League members.

- Local Leagues should submit documents electronically.
- The local League president should assign someone the responsibility for transmitting the following documents as indicated.

| Item  | Send to  | Date            |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <b>Organization Documents</b>   |  |                 |
| Annual meeting materials:<br>Workbook, budget, bylaws,<br>local program, policy and<br>board of directors list. | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>           | June 1st        |
| Membership: new members,<br>updated contact information:  | <a href="http://lwv.force.com/portal/login">lwv.force.com/portal/login</a> | Update Monthly. |
| <b>Communication</b>  |  |                 |
| Correspondence to LWVUS   | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>           | As needed       |
| Correspondence<br>to state and<br>national officials  | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>           | As needed       |
| Newspaper   | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>           | As needed       |

|  |   |                                |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| articles/clippings/links to online articles                            |   |                                |
| <b>Financial Items</b>   |   |                                |
| Per member payment (PMP)   | State office, national office   | Due 7/31, 10, 31, 1/31, & 4/30 |
| Sales tax report and check, if applicable                              | Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts  |                                |
| 990 tax form   | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>                      |                                |
| <b>Program Items</b>   |   |                                |
| Consensus, concurrence, program  | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>                      | as needed                      |
| <b>Publications</b>  |   |                                |
| All publications   | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>                      | as needed                      |
| <i>Voters Guide</i>  | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>                      | as needed                      |
| <i>VOTER</i> or other newsletters                                      | <a href="mailto:lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org">lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org</a>                      | as needed                      |
| <b>Creative Ideas to Empower Voters. Defend Democracy</b>              |   |                                |
| Local League projects!<br>Membership projects!<br>Voter turnout ideas! | <a href="https://my.lwv.org/texas/contact-us">https://my.lwv.org/texas/contact-us</a> | as needed                      |

## LWVTX Style

### Proofreading

The League has a reputation for publishing thoroughly researched, carefully written documents. If a League publication contains typographical, grammatical, or stylistic errors, the reader may think that carelessness in presentation reflects inaccuracy of content. Thus accurate proofreading is critical.

- Draft your material; carefully re-read to satisfy an audience with less knowledge of the subject.
- [Grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com) & the [AP Stylebook](http://www.apstylebook.com) are very helpful
- [Hemingway.com](http://www.hemingway.com) app improves readability level.
- Proofread and correct your final draft.

- Read aloud any material, such as testimony, that will be read aloud.

## **League Lingo**

**action** Promotion of a League position on local, state, and national public policy issues to government officials, the media, and the public by the president of the League or an authorized representative

**action alert** Request from the state or national League to take action at a specific time in support of a League position

**Action News!** A monthly electronic newsletter sent by LWVTX to League members in Texas.

**advocacy** Arguing in favor of a cause, an idea, or a policy (does not necessarily involve lobbying)

**annual meeting** A local League year-end business meeting to elect officers and directors, vote on bylaws changes, and adopt a budget and program of work for the next year.

**Annual Report** A wrap up of the LWVTX years activities

calendar Plans by the board of directors for the League year for League program and other activities

**Capitol Action Report** An electronic newsletter sent by LWVTX to League members in Texas during the Legislative session. Includes legislative news, advocacy, and actions.

**Capital Corps** League members from the Austin area who assist issue chairs with legislative visits, testimony, and other state League advocacy efforts

**concurrence** A method of adopting a position reached through consensus by another League; Leagues can also concur with the recommendations of a resource committee or decision statements formulated by a League board of directors

**consensus** Collective opinion of a substantial number of League members, representative of the membership as a whole; reached through objective study and discussion of an issue, not a vote

**convention** A state or national League meeting held biennially in which League delegates adopt program, elect officers and directors for the biennium, adopt a budget, act on proposed bylaws changes, and conduct other business

**council** (national) A biennial meeting of League delegates to adopt a budget and review program, held in years between conventions and with a more limited representation

**education fund** A publicly supported, nonmembership organization to which tax-deductible donations can be made; LWV Texas Education Fund (LWVTEF) was established in 1966 to operate exclusively for educational purposes in the area of government and public policy. It also holds tax-deductible donations made to local Leagues and makes grants to the state and local Leagues to carry out the educational purpose of the League

**Facts & Issues (F&I)** A balanced, unbiased, nonpartisan report authored by a study committee that reflects a diversity of views on the study topic and summarizes the facts as well as alternatives for change in public policy

**household member** If more than one member of a household is a member of the League, each additional household member is assessed half the per member payment for dues by the state and national Leagues; local dues may or may not follow this pattern

**issue chair** A League member who monitors a specific LWVTX position and educates others about it, promotes its visibility, and advocates on its behalf

**life member** A person who has been a League member for 50 years or more; life members are excused

from dues payment, and their Leagues pay no per member payment for them

**lobbying** communicating with elected officials (or their staff) to urge a position on a pending piece of legislation; always involves advocacy

**state member** A member who resides outside of, and is not enrolled in, a local League

**League at large (LAL)** A state-recognized group of members in an area where there is no local League who become a formal group and provide League service in their communities

**nonpartisan** The League does not support or oppose political parties or candidates for public office at any level, including candidates who may be a League member

**Observer Corps** League members who attend governmental meetings, note what happens at the meetings, and report back to the League and community to promote government transparency and accountability and ensure that citizens are aware of decisions that impact their lives

**orientation** Basic background material provided in writing or at meetings to help members understand League purposes, policies, and procedures

**per member payment (PMP)** The amount of dues paid to the state and national Leagues on behalf of each member; determined by delegates to the state and national conventions; assessed based on the membership count on January 31 of each year

**political** The League studies public policy issues and advocates for change in government policy and legislation without regard to political party

**position** A statement of the League point of view on a public issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus, concurrence) and approved by the appropriate board of directors; used as the basis for League action

**program** Selected governmental issues chosen by the membership at local, state, and national levels for League study and action

**program planning** The process through which members suggest (a) a new topic for study, (b) review of a current position for a possible update, or (c) an amendment to a current position, or (d) a new position to be adopted by concurrence

**programs** Planned, coordinated activities (speakers, discussion, et al.) at League meetings, often for a specific purpose

**unit** A subdivision of a League with a large membership; provides maximum participation by members in discussion of League program and activities

**Voter** A League newsletter for members and others; published by local and state Leagues

**Voters Guide (VG)** A nonpartisan publication that includes candidates' qualifications and positions on selected issues or pro/con information on propositions or amendments

**voters service (VS)** Year-round activity to help citizens be politically effective and encourage their participation in the political process; registering voters and presenting factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and election issues are the two most basic voters service activities

# Bylaws of the League of Women Voters of Texas

*Adopted June 19, 1947*

*Amended 1956, 1958, 1960, 1962, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2018*

## ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be League of Women Voters of Texas, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVTX, or, as the state League. This state League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVUS.

## ARTICLE II. PURPOSES AND POLICY

### Section 1. Purposes

The purposes of the LWVTX are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

### Section 2. Political Policy

The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

## ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1. Eligibility

Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the League shall be eligible for membership.

### Section 2. Types of Membership

- a. *Voting members.* Persons at least 16 years of age who join the LWVTX shall be voting members of the local and state Leagues of their place of joining and of the LWVUS;
  - 1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League;
  - 2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members at large;
  - 3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.
- b. *Associate members.* All others who join the League shall be associate members.

## ARTICLE IV. LOCAL LEAGUES AND LEAGUES-AT-LARGE

### Section 1. Local Leagues

- a. Local Leagues are those Leagues within the state of Texas that have been so recognized by the LWVUS.
- b. The board of directors, hereinafter also referred to as the state board, shall recommend to the board of the LWVUS, hereinafter referred to as the national board, that it recognize as a local League any group of members of the League in any community within the state provided the group fulfills recognition requirements.
- c. In the event of recurrent failure of a local League to fulfill the national and/or state requirements, the board of the LWVTX shall recommend to the national board that it withdraw recognition from such Local League. In the event of the dissolution of the local League, all monies and securities that may at the time be owned or under the control of the local League shall be paid to the LWVTX after the local League board has paid or made provision for the payment of all liabilities of the local League. All other property of whatsoever nature, whether real, personal, or mixed, which may at the time be owned or under the control of the local League, shall be disposed of to such person, organization, or corporation for such public, charitable, or educational use and purposes as the state board in its absolute discretion may designate.

## Section 2. Leagues-at-Large

- a. The state board may authorize the establishment of Leagues-at-Large, composed of state members, where feasible. Leagues-at-Large shall operate within the limitations established by the LWVUS and within guidelines adopted by the state board.
- b. In the event of recurrent failure to adhere to guidelines for Leagues-at-Large or to operate within the limitations established by the LWVUS, the state board may withdraw approval of the League-at-Large. All assets held by a League-at-Large from which approval has been withdrawn shall be turned over to the state League.

## ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

### Section 1. Election, Qualifications, and Term

The officers of the LWVTX shall be a president, four vice presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer.

They shall be voting members of the LWVTX and shall be elected by the convention to hold office for 2 years beginning June 1 of the year of their election or until their successors have been elected and qualified.

### Section 2. The President

The president shall have such powers of supervision and management as customarily pertain to the office; shall preside at all meetings of the organization and the state board, or designate another person to do so; shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees except the nominating committee; may sign or endorse checks, drafts, and notes in the absence or disability of the treasurer; and shall perform such other duties as the state board may direct.

### Section 3. The Vice Presidents

At its first board meeting the new state board shall designate one vice president who, in the event of the absence, disability, resignation, or death of the president, shall assume the office of president. Should that vice president be unable to serve as president, the state board shall choose one of its other elected members to fill the vacancy. The vice presidents shall perform such duties as the president and state board direct.

### Section 4. The Secretary

The secretary shall keep or cause to be kept minutes of convention, statewide conference, and meetings of the state board. The secretary shall notify all officers and directors of their election and shall sign with the president all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the board and shall perform such other duties as the president and state board shall direct.

### Section 5. The Treasurer

The treasurer shall perform such duties as customarily pertain to the office; arrange for an at least biennial professional review of the books; and, at the direction of the state board, maintain deposits in authorized financial institutions.

## ARTICLE VI. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Section 1. Selection, Qualifications, and Term

The board of directors shall consist of the officers of the LWVTX, six directors elected by the convention, and not more than six directors appointed by the elected members of the board. All directors shall be voting members of the LWVTX and shall serve for 2 years beginning June 1 of the year of their election, or until their successors have been elected and qualified. Vacancies other than the presidency may be filled by vote of the remaining members of the board.

### Section 2. Powers

The state board shall manage and supervise the business, affairs, and activities of the LWVTX subject to the instruction of the convention. The board shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program on state governmental matters as adopted by the convention. It shall accept responsibility for the organization and development of local Leagues and member-at-large units, the promotion of League program, financial development, and such other matters as the national

board may from time to time delegate to it. It shall have the power to create such special committees as it deems necessary and shall perform such other duties as are specified in these bylaws.

### Section 3. Meetings

At least three regular meetings shall be held annually at such time and place as the board may determine. The president may call special meetings and, upon the written request of at least five members of the board, shall call a special meeting. Notice of all regular meetings shall be given at least 2 weeks before the meeting and notice of all special meetings shall be given at least three days before the meeting. During a convention or statewide conference, the president may, or upon the request of at least five members, shall call a special meeting by giving written notice to each member of the board. Special meetings may be held by electronic communication.

### Section 4. Absences

Unexcused absences from two consecutive board meetings or three unexcused absences from board meetings in a biennium shall be considered a resignation from the board.

### Section 5. Quorum

A majority of the members of the board of the LWVTX shall constitute a quorum. Any one or more members of the board may participate in a special meeting by means of electronic communication. Participation by such means shall constitute presence at a meeting.

### Section 6. Indemnification and Limitation of Liability

The directors and all officers or other appointed representatives of the League of Women Voters of Texas shall be indemnified and their liability shall be limited to the fullest extent authorized by the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, Article 1396-2.22A, Vernon's Annotated Civil Statutes, as it now exists or hereafter may be amended and by the Charitable Immunity and Liability Act, Chapter 84 of the Civil Practices and Remedies Code.

### Section 7. Removal From Office

In executing the duties of their office, board members are expected to carry out applicable laws and regulations as well as League bylaws, mission, policies, principles, positions, standards and procedures. Board members who do not shall be counseled. If violations persist, they may be removed from office by a 2/3 vote of the board of directors.

## Article VII. Convention

### Section 1. Place, Date, and Call

A convention of the LWVTX shall be held biennially in the even-numbered years at a time and place determined by the state board. A first call to convention shall be sent to the presidents of local Leagues, to the chairs of member-at-large units, and to members at large not in units at least 120 days before the date fixed in said call. Thereafter, the state board may advance or postpone this date by not more than 14 days. A final call, giving the exact time and place of the convention, shall be issued at least 42 days before the session opens.

### Section 2. Composition

The convention shall consist of

- a. the president of each local League/ League-at-Large or an alternate, in the event the president is unable to attend;
- b. delegates chosen by members of local Leagues/Leagues-at-Large as follows: One delegate for the first 15 voting members, and one delegate for every 10 additional voting members or major fraction thereof. The official membership count shall be determined by state office records of voting members as of January 31 of the year in which convention is held. Each provisional League and each member-at-large unit with at least 10 members shall be entitled to one voting delegate; and
- c. the members of the state board.

### Section 3. Delegates' Qualifications and Voting

All delegates shall be voting members of the LWVTX. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted. The convention shall be the sole judge of whether or not a delegate is qualified to vote.

#### Section 4. Powers

The convention shall adopt a program; elect officers and directors, the chair and two members of the nominating committee; adopt a budget; and transact such other business as may properly come before it.

#### Section 5. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the delegates registered at the convention provided that no fewer than a majority of local Leagues are represented.

### Article VIII. Statewide Conference

#### Section 1. Place, Date, and Call

A statewide conference may be called as needed at a time and place determined by the state board. A formal call shall be issued to local League presidents and chairs of member-at-large units at least 30 days before a statewide conference meeting.

#### Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of the statewide conference shall be determined by the interests and needs of members, local Leagues, members-at-large units, and the state board. The statewide conference is open to all League members. Business may be conducted if necessary.

#### Section 3. Conduct of Business

- a. In event of conduct of business, eligible voters will be as follows:
  - 1) the president of each local League or an alternate, in the event the president is unable to attend; and one other delegate chosen by the local League board. Each member-at-large unit with at least 10 members shall be entitled to one voting delegate; and
  - 2) the members of the state board.
- b. *Quorum*. A majority of voting delegates registered at statewide conference shall constitute a quorum provided that no fewer than a majority of local Leagues are represented.

#### Section 4. Powers

- a. In the event of conduct of business, the statewide conference may give guidance to the state board on program and methods of work.
- b. In the event of an emergency, the statewide conference may change the program upon recommendation of the state board or a local League, using the following procedure:
  - 1) Any local League proposing a change shall submit it to the state board at least 60 days before a proposed statewide conference; the state board shall decide whether or not to recommend the change.
  - 2) At least 30 days before the statewide conference, the state board shall send to the presidents of local Leagues all proposed changes.
  - 3) A majority vote of the delegates present and voting shall be required for consideration of any change proposed by a local League and not recommended by the state board.
  - 4) A two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting shall be required to adopt any change.
- c. The statewide conference may transact other business that may properly come before it.

### ARTICLE IX. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

#### Section 1. Nominating Committee

The nominating committee shall consist of five members. The chair and two members, who shall not be members of the state board, shall be elected by the convention. At its first board meeting, the state board shall appoint two of its members to the committee. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment by the state board maintaining the off board/on board representation.

## Section 2. Suggestions for Nominations

The chair of the nominating committee shall request suggestions for nominations through the president of each local League and the chairs of member-at-large units by advising them of the offices to be filled and the address to which suggestions are to be sent. Members may submit suggestions directly to the committee.

## Section 3. Report of the Nominating Committee

The report of the nominating committee, containing its nominations for officers and directors and the chair and two members of the next nominating committee, shall be sent to the presidents of local Leagues and to the chairs of member-at-large units at least 30 days before the convention. The report of the nominating committee shall be presented to the convention on the first day of the convention. Nominations may be made from the floor immediately thereafter provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained.

## Section 4. Election

The administration of the election shall be the responsibility of an election committee appointed by the president on the first day of the convention. Election shall be by ballot except that if there is only one nominee for an office it shall be by voice vote. A majority vote of the delegates present and voting shall constitute an election.

# ARTICLE X. PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAM

## Section 1. Principles

The principles are concepts of government adopted by the national convention and supported by the League as a whole. They are the authorization for the adoption of national, state, and local program.

## Section 2. Program

The program of the LWVTX shall consist of action to implement the Principles and those state governmental issues chosen by the convention, or statewide conference using the procedure outlined in Article VIII, Section 4 for concerted study or concurrence and action as follows:

- a. Local League boards may make recommendations for state program, including proposed concurrence, to the state board at least 3 months before the convention or statewide meeting.
- b. The state board shall consider these recommendations and formulate a proposed program, which shall be sent to the presidents of local Leagues and to the chairs of member-at-large units at least 30 days before the convention or statewide conference.
- c. Any League or the state board that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence on the floor of the convention shall give notice to the state office to be sent to all local Leagues and the state board, of its intent to do so at least 6 weeks before the convention. The proposing League or state board shall send background information, including pros and cons on the issue and an explanation of the rationale for using this form of member agreement to the state office and the state office shall send the information to all local Leagues, state board, and MAL units at least 30 days before Convention.
- d. The convention shall adopt the proposed program by a majority vote on each subject presented to it. A program recommendation submitted to the state board at least 3 months prior to convention but not proposed by the state board may be adopted by the convention if its consideration is ordered by a majority vote of the convention and the vote on adoption comes on a following day. A two-thirds vote is required to adopt a non-proposed item, or to amend or adopt a state League position by concurrence on the floor of the convention.

## Section 3. Program Action

Local Leagues may act on program only in conformity with positions taken by the LWVUS or the LWVTX. Local Leagues or members may act on program at the state level in the name of the League only when authorized to do so by the state board.

## ARTICLE XI. NATIONAL CONVENTION AND COUNCIL

### Section 1. National Convention

The state board, at its earliest meeting of the year in which the convention is held, shall elect delegates to the national convention in the number allowed the LWVTX under the provisions of the bylaws of the LWVUS.

### Section 2. National Council

The state board, at its earliest meeting of the year in which the council is held, shall elect delegates to the national council in the number allowed the LWVTX under the provisions of the bylaws of LWVUS.

## ARTICLE XII. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

### Section 1. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the LWVTX shall be from June 1 to May 31 of each year.

### Section 2. Financial Support

- a. Annually the local Leagues shall assume financial responsibility for the work of the LWVTX.
- b. Each local League shall make an annual per member payment to the LWVTX in an amount to be determined by a three-fifths vote of the delegates present and voting at each convention. When two or more members reside at the same address in a common household, the payment determined by the convention shall be made for the first member; a payment equal to one-half the per member payment shall be paid for each other member. A local League shall be excused from making a per member payment for life members. Annual minimum state support payment shall be established for local Leagues as determined by a three-fifths vote of those delegates present and voting at convention. Each member at large shall pay annual dues to the LWVTX in an amount set by the state board. Provisional Leagues shall make annual support payments as determined by the state board.
- c. Responsibility for additional support for the LWVTX shall be assumed by the state board, which shall develop and solicit other sources for funding the state League and shall encourage supporters of the state League to contribute also to any local Leagues in their area.

### Section 3. Budget Committee

A 2-year budget shall be prepared by a committee appointed for that purpose at least 180 days before the convention. The treasurer shall be, ex officio, a member of the budget committee but shall not be eligible to serve as chair.

### Section 4. The Budget

The state board shall send to the presidents of local Leagues and to chairs of member at large units, at least 30 days before the convention, a proposed 2-year budget. A budget shall be adopted by a majority vote except that the per member payment shall be approved as provided in Section 2 of this Article.

### Section 5. Distribution of Funds on Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the LWVTX all monies and securities which may at the time be owned by or under the control of the LWVTX shall be paid to the LWVUS after the state board has paid or made provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the LWVTX. All other property of whatsoever nature, whether real, personal, or mixed, which may at the time be owned by or under the control of the LWVTX, shall be disposed of to such person, organization, or corporation, for educational use and purposes as the state board in its absolute discretion may designate.

## ARTICLE XIII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

## ARTICLE XIV. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at any convention by a two-thirds vote of delegates present and voting provided that the proposed amendment was submitted to the state board at least 120 days before convention by a local League board or has been proposed by the state board. The state board shall send all such proposed amendments, together with the board's recommendations, to the presidents of local Leagues and to the chairs of member-at-large units at least 30 days before the convention.

## State Charter

League of Women Voters of Texas

*As Amended August 10, 1956*

### **KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENT:**

<sup>T</sup><sub>HAT</sub> <sup>W</sup><sub>E</sub>, Mrs. Harris Masterson and Ruth Hastings, residents and citizens of Harris County, Texas, and Mrs. Carl L. Voss, a resident and citizen of Dallas County, Texas, under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Texas, do hereby voluntarily associate ourselves together for the purpose of forming a private corporation, under the terms and conditions set out as follows:

- I. The name of this corporation shall be the League of Women Voters of Texas.
- II. The purpose for which this corporation is formed is in support of an educational undertaking and specifically to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government; to render such other services in the interest of education in citizenship as may be possible, and to do every act appropriate or necessary to carry out any of the foregoing objects. The corporation shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.
- III. The principal office of the corporation and the place where its business shall be transacted is the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas.
- IV. The term for which it is to exist is fifty (50) years. \*
- V. The number of directors shall be not less than three, nor more than twenty one; and the names and post office addresses of the directors for the first year are as follows:

Mrs. Harris Masterson, Houston, Texas Mrs. Carl L. Voss, Dallas,

Texas

Ruth Hastings, Houston, Texas

- VI. This corporation is formed for the support of an educational undertaking as specified in Article II without profit to the corporation and, therefore has no capital stock. This corporation has now no goods, chattels, nor lands.

<sup>I</sup><sub>N</sub> <sup>T</sup><sub>ESTIMONY</sub> <sup>W</sup><sub>HEREOF</sub>, we hereunto sign our names this, the 18th day of December  
A.D. 1930.

Mrs. Harris Masterson Ruth Hastings  
Mrs. Carl L. Voss

- \* "Texas Non Profit Corporation Act, Article 1396 2.02. General Powers A. (1). To have perpetual succession by its corporate name, unless a limited period of duration is stated in its articles of incorporation. Notwithstanding the articles of incorporation, the period of duration for any corporation incorporated before August 10, 1959, is perpetual if all fees and franchise taxes have been paid as provided by law."