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Subject: LWVSC Advocacy/Lobbying: Policies and Legalities
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Concerns periodically arise about interacting with state legislators in the name of the League; as the legislative session begins, we are sending this clarification of the policies and legalities that apply. Please feel free to respond to this email if you have questions.

LWVSC Advocacy and Lobbying Guidelines

Every League member has complete freedom to advocate as an individual for her or his personal positions on any issue. Members are strongly encouraged to be active citizen advocates, communicating their concerns to public officials and others as informed constituents. This is both an important aspect of League membership and protected speech under the U. S. Constitution. We hope that personal constituent advocacy for LWVSC State House legislative priorities will be a significant part of this. This is essential to the success of the LWVSC legislative agenda.

However, LWVSC policy, state law, and sound advocacy strategy require that only a few individuals can speak for the LWVSC or can attempt to directly influence official actions on behalf of the LWVSC.

Public Statements

LWVSC State Board Policies provide that public statements made in the name of LWVSC conform to the following in order to ensure that LWVSC speaks with one voice:

12. PUBLICITY:

A. All public statements, including official letters, are made in the name of the

president or her/his designee and only with her/his knowledge and approval. No publicity material should be released until approved by the president. Action Alerts from LWWUS are exceptions.

The LWWSC VP for Advocacy is authorized to speak publicly in support of LWWSC board-approved State House legislative priorities.

LWWSC presidents authorize local League presidents to designate individuals to present LWWSC priorities to legislative delegations during their public in-district meetings. These designated individuals should take care to indicate support only for those issues for which LWWUS or LWWSC positions exist, and not to represent as LWWSC State House priorities-for-action anything not designated as such by the LWWSC board.

Lobbying

Lobbying can be a part of a larger advocacy strategy, but it is not the same as member advocacy. LWWSC is a registered lobbyist principal with the State Ethics Commission of South Carolina. The Vice President for Issues and Action is authorized by the LWWSC board to register with the Ethics Commission as the LWWSC lobbyist. What does this mean?

Lobbying as defined by SC Code §2-17-10 (12) is as follows:

"Lobbying" means promoting or opposing through direct communication with public officials or public employees:

(a) the introduction or enactment of legislation before the General Assembly or the committees or members of the General Assembly;

(b) covered gubernatorial actions;

(c) covered agency actions; or

(d) consideration of the election or appointment of an individual to a public office elected or appointed by the General Assembly.

The relevant portions of the SC Code contain abundant specific requirements and prohibitions related to the activities of lobbyists and their principals. These requirements and prohibitions exist for very sound reasons, to ensure public accountability by organizations attempting to influence official actions. They are also important to provide clarity to officials, who must be able to identify representatives who are genuinely authorized to make requests of them or make commitments on behalf of an organization.

It is for these reasons that the LWWSC cautions members not to undertake any communications with officials that could be identified as lobbying on behalf of

communications with officials that could be identified as lobbying on behalf of LWVSC as defined under the statute.

In Summary

LWVSC encourages members to be strong citizen advocates, and to include in this our LWVSC State House legislative priorities. In doing so members can identify themselves as League members but must not imply or state that they speak on behalf of LWVSC, either publicly or privately, unless authorized as outlined in these guidelines.

Local Leagues can conduct educational programs on any additional aspect of LWVUS or LWVSC positions not identified by the LWVSC board as a State House priority and can encourage personal member advocacy on those issues. Again, there must be no indication that this represents a request for official action by LWVSC.

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