

# Important Program Planning Terminology

**LWV PROGRAM:** Selected issues chosen by members at the local, regional, state, and national levels for study and action during a given program period (Program for LWVMpls is selected annually, Program for LWVMN and LWVUS is selected biannually).

**LWV POSITION:** A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (either by consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board of directors, and used as a basis for League action.

**LWV PRINCIPLES:** Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They represent the “basic principles” that we support as an organization, and constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

## Selected Action Terminology:

**LOBBYING** includes asking members of the public to contact their legislators or any executive office or agency. Lobbying on an issue requires having an LWV position on the issue and should be coordinated with the proper level of League (i.e. local, state, or national).

**EDUCATION** does not advocate for a specific policy and is solely for informational and educational purposes. Local LWVs may do education on a variety of topics in their own communities and this type of activity does not require authorization from higher levels of League (although you may wish to consult other League bodies to see if they have useful educational resources that can be used by your local League).

**ADVOCACY** is position-related but is distinct from lobbying in that it *does not contact government officials or ask or encourage members of the public to contact government officials*. Local LWVs may do local advocacy on a variety of issues without pre-authorization from higher levels of League.

## Position Related Terminology:

**Studies** (a.k.a. “A Formal Study”) (whether national, state, regional, or local) are a defined process of research and learning lasting one to two years, during which we undertake a thorough pursuit of facts and details, both positive and negative, relating to a public policy issue, culminating in a final report. Study committee members fashion **consensus questions** that are then asked of the membership as part of a study kit.

**Consensus** is the overall decision-making process by which substantial agreement among members is reached on an issue. If the members reach consensus, the board forms a *position* (see definition above) based on that consensus.

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**Consensus Statement** is the statement resulting from the consensus questions, which becomes a "position." *Firm action can then be taken on the particular issue addressed by the position.* Without a position, actions such as lobbying, public testimony, or advocacy cannot be taken by LWV on an issue.

**Concurrence** is the act of agreeing with—or concurring with—a statement or position. A decision-making technique used by the LWV for some time, concurrence can work in several ways. Groups of LWV members or LWV boards can concur with: recommendations of a resource committee or a unit group; decision statements formulated by LWV boards; or positions reached by another LWV or LWVs. As a general rule, background materials presenting the pros and cons on the issue being considered are provided to LWVs and members in the concurrence process. In area LWVs, an issue relating to one jurisdiction is often studied by members living in that jurisdiction, and, after member agreement has been reached by those members, the other members are asked to concur with the results.

**Update** is a method of amending an existing position without undertaking a full-blown *study* (see definition above). A position is amended only after members study the issue and go through some type of consensus/concurrence process before adopting the amended position.

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