

# **ISSUES SPECIALIST MANUAL**



## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE**

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July, 2008

Dear Off-Board Specialist,

This manual was prepared with you in mind. We received many suggestions at the November 2007 Off-Board Specialist meeting as well as through email. In addition those who attended our meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup> offered many new thoughts which are now integrated into this report.

Most of these materials were taken from the State Board Kit and updated for your convenience and easy referencing. However, you should have the total State Board Kit for understanding the broad range of the LWVNYS activities and guidelines outside your specific area of concern. We hope to have an updated copy for you soon.

In addition, new material has been added to this manual as appendices that present the broad range of League Advocacy and the Legislative context in which we work.

We hope we have met your expectations. However, please do not hesitate to comment on the materials, their usefulness (or not), and any other information you would like included. We appreciate all your work in promoting League positions and want to support your efforts.

Ad Hoc Off-Board Specialist Committee  
Georgia DeGregorio, Chair, Grassroots Lobby Director  
Edna Vincenti, Vice-President/Issues and Advocacy  
Barbara Bartoletti, Legislative Director  
Betsey Swan, Legislative Analyst  
Helga Schroeter, Off-Board Specialist for Court Restructuring  
Martha Kennedy, President, Ex-officio



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE**  
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***BOARD OF DIRECTORS***  
***May 2009/May 2011***

***OFFICERS***

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**VACANT**

**AT-LARGE**

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JoAnn Ross

Cheryl Feldman

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**LOCAL LEAGUE ORGANIZED COUNTY LIST**

ALBANY COUNTY  
Albany

ALLEGANY COUNTY  
Unorganized

BROOME COUNTY  
Broome & Tioga

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY  
Unorganized

CAYUGA COUNTY  
Unorganized

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY  
Chautauqua

CHEMUNG COUNTY  
Chemung

CHENANGO COUNTY  
Unorganized

CLINTON COUNTY  
Plattsburgh Area

COLUMBIA COUNTY  
Columbia

CORTLAND COUNTY  
Cortland

DELAWARE COUNTY  
Unorganized

DUTCHESS COUNTY  
Unit of Mid-Hudson

ERIE COUNTY  
Buffalo/Niagara

ESSEX COUNTY  
Unorganized

FRANKLIN COUNTY  
Unorganized

FULTON COUNTY  
Unorganized

GENESEE COUNTY  
Rochester Metro Area

GREENE COUNTY  
Unorganized

HAMILTON COUNTY  
Unorganized

HERIKIMER COUNTY  
Unorganized

JEFFERSON COUNTY  
Unorganized

LEWIS COUNTY  
Unorganized

LIVINGSTON COUNTY  
Unorganized

MADISON COUNTY  
Cazenovia

MONROE COUNTY  
Rochester Metro Area

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
Unorganized

NASSAU COUNTY (ILO)  
Central Nassau  
East Nassau  
Great Neck  
Greater Five Towns  
Greater Westbury  
Long Beach  
Port Washington-  
Manhasset

NEW YORK CITY  
Composed of Bronx,  
Kings (Brooklyn),  
Manhattan, New York,  
Queens, and Richmond  
(Staten Island), Counties

NIAGARA COUNTY  
Buffalo/Niagara

ONEIDA COUNTY  
Greater Oneida Area  
Utica/Rome Metro Area

ONONDAGA COUNTY  
Syracuse Metro Area

ONTARIO COUNTY  
Geneva

ORANGE COUNTY  
Unorganized

ORLEANS COUNTY  
Orleans

OSWEGO COUNTY  
Unorganized

OTSEGO COUNTY  
Cooperstown Area  
Oneonta Area

PUTNAM COUNTY  
MAL Unit

RENSSELAER COUNTY  
Rensselaer

ROCKLAND COUNTY  
Rockland

SARATOGA COUNTY  
Saratoga

SCHENECTADY  
Schenectady

SCHOHARIE COUNTY  
Unorganized

SCHUYLER COUNTY  
Schuyler

SENECA COUNTY  
Unorganized

ST. LAWRENCE CTY  
Unorganized

STEUBEN COUNTY  
Steuben

SUFFOLK COUNTY (ILO)  
Brookhaven  
Hamptons  
Huntington  
Shelter Island  
Smithtown

SULLIVAN COUNTY  
Unorganized

TIOGA COUNTY  
Broome & Tioga

TOMPKINS COUNTY  
Tompkins County

ULSTER COUNTY  
Mid-Hudson  
Saugerties

WARREN COUNTY  
MAL Unit

WASHINGTON COUNTY  
Unorganized

WAYNE COUNTY  
Unorganized

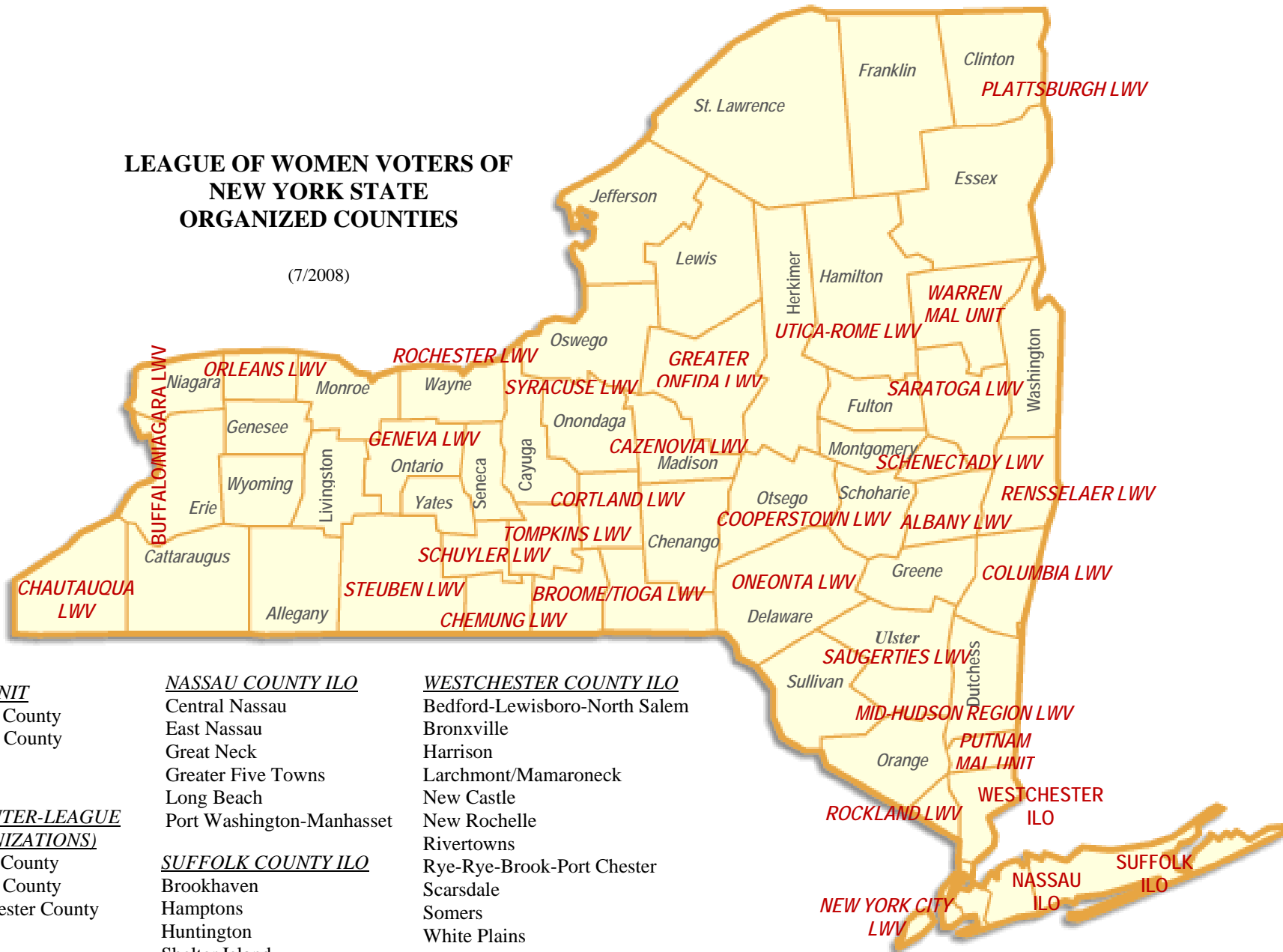
WESTCHESTER COUNTY (ILO)  
Bedford-Lewisboro-  
No. Salem  
Bronxville  
Harrison  
Larchmont/Mamaroneck  
New Castle  
New Rochelle  
Rivertowns  
Rye-Rye Brook-Port  
Chester  
Scarsdale  
Somers  
White Plains

WYOMING COUNTY  
Unorganized

YATES COUNTY  
Unorganized

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
NEW YORK STATE  
ORGANIZED COUNTIES**

(7/2008)



MAL UNIT

- Warren County
- Putnam County

ILO (INTER-LEAGUE ORGANIZATIONS)

- Nassau County
- Suffolk County
- Westchester County

NASSAU COUNTY ILO

- Central Nassau
- East Nassau
- Great Neck
- Greater Five Towns
- Long Beach
- Port Washington-Manhasset

SUFFOLK COUNTY ILO

- Brookhaven
- Hamptons
- Huntington
- Shelter Island
- Smithtown

WESTCHESTER COUNTY ILO

- Bedford-Lewisboro-North Salem
- Bronxville
- Harrison
- Larchmont/Mamaroneck
- New Castle
- New Rochelle
- Rivertowns
- Rye-Rye-Brook-Port Chester
- Scarsdale
- Somers
- White Plains

ISSUES AND ADVOCACY STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE  
& OFF-BOARD SPECIALISTS  
FLOW CHART

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Board

State Issues Committee Consists of:

Chair: Vice-President/Issues and Advocacy

Committee Members: Legislative Director / Grassroots Lobby Director / Legislative Analyst /  
The Single Issue OBS related to the item under review

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*Ex Officio* Member  
President

The Legislative Analyst will receive notice of all meetings of the State Issues Committee. He/she may decline to serve either by withdrawing from that meeting of the committee or failing to respond in a timely fashion.

If a Single Issue Off-Board Specialist calls a meeting, he/she shall be a member of the committee for purposes of that meeting. Otherwise, he/she shall serve for purposes of a particular meeting only if the meeting concerns a matter contained in his/her portfolio.

In addition, two new positions are being considered in the future as part of the State Issues Committee: Policy Director and Administrative Regulation Director

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**SINGLE ISSUE OFF-BOARD SPECIALIST**

*(Updated July 2008)*

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**            *SINGLE ISSUE OFF-BOARD SPECIALIST*

**REPORTS TO:**                *VICE- PRESIDENT ISSUES & ADVOCACY*

**OBJECTIVES:**                *TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A PLAN OF EDUCATION AND/ OR ACTION RELATED TO HIS/HER PORTFOLIO FOR THE PUBLIC, THE LOCAL LEAGUES AND THE STATE LEAGUE*

**RESPONSIBILITIES** *(Note: for optimum results the following is suggested):*

1. Work with a member of the State Issues Committee in developing a plan for the coming year (*see Appendix for Forma*) related to his/her responsibility. This document should be completed during the summer so that the plan for the next year can be submitted to the September State Board meeting for approval. Following *Action Guidelines*, this plan should include appropriate education and advocacy items along with a plan to update the website when necessary.
2. Develop an annual timeline for implementation of this plan and the manner of reporting to the Issues & Advocacy VP on the status of the plan. The timeline should begin in September of each year unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
3. Periodically review this plan and timeline and report re change in status.
4. Write State Board Reports (*see Appendix for Format*) and Voter articles re this issue. Note that the due dates for these reports are found on the state calendar on the LWVNYS website. Update Impact on Issues and LWVNYS Web Site. In addition, prepare an annual LWV report summarizing the year's work which is due by the end of April for Convention or Council. Write paragraphs to be included in Capitol Beat on significant items. All above writing is submitted to the VP Issues & Advocacy for review.
5. Serve on the State Issues Committee when your item is being addressed. For most productive and timely communication with the Committee, address your email to its members (V.P. for Issues/Advocacy, Legislative Director, Legislative Analyst, Grassroots Lobby Director, President and Staff). Clearly state your goals, the position you are advocating for, what action you wish to take, and your deadline by which you must receive an answer. All communication should be responded to by using "REPLY ALL" so whole committee can be involved in the discussion. After all participants respond, the V.P. for Issues and Advocacy will email the final decision so that the OBS can then proceed.
6. Review bills and proposed administrative regulations in consultation with the State Issues Committee and Legislative Analyst as is appropriate. Determine position to be taken and person(s) responsible for the development of written materials and implementation of advocacy strategies.

7. Prepare new/review old materials that support the position. If appropriate, prepare a Legislative Memo without bill numbers in advance so can be ready for immediate distribution when bill is introduced (see Appendix for *Legislative Memo Format*).
8. Respond to Legislative Director's advice about bills to be introduced in the legislature as well as bring to State Issues Committee's attention bills related to his/her item. Such response would include research; production and distribution of memoranda and correspondence concerning this legislation including Action Alerts (see Appendix for *Action Alert Format*). It should be noted that during Legislative session, the Legislative director and office staff go on line Friday afternoon to see what committees will be meeting the following week and their agendas. In this way the OBS can be advised of potential opportunity for action and can send through the office staff legislative memos to the appropriate committee chair and sponsors.
9. Communicate with Local Leagues to encourage member action, including using the *List Serves* included after Guidelines.
10. Work with Media in Area of Specialty in coordination with the Legislative Director to further League visibility and awareness of League issues.
11. Work with Other Organizations and Advocacy Groups, as approved by the board of directors, to help achieve League advocacy goals (see Guidelines regarding *Joining Coalitions*).
12. Attend Fall Meeting with other OBS's to establish action priorities for the next year.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**VICE-PRESIDENT/ISSUES & ADVOCACY**  
*(Updated July 2008)*

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**        *VICE-PRESIDENT/ISSUES & ADVOCACY*

**REPORTS TO:**                *PRESIDENT*

**OBJECTIVES:**                *TO OVERSEE AND COORDINATE THE ISSUES & ADVOCACY  
ACTIVITIES OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW  
YORK STATE*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Oversee the Issues & Advocacy functions following the *Action Guidelines* and directing the development of an Education & Action plan for the year.
2. Chair the State Issues Committee and report to the board. If he/she participates in a meeting of the State Issues Committee, maintain a report noting the date of the meeting, which shall be the last day by which action can be taken, the participants, and the decision. If he/she does not participate in a meeting, she should designate her representative from the State Issues Committee and notify the office staff of same. The same information shall be reported by the person directing the meeting for inclusion in the report at the next board meeting.
3. Supervise and assist other State Issue Committee Directors and the Off Board Specialists to assure effective performance...
4. Support and advise local Leagues as requested.
5. Direct the selection of action priorities for the new League year. In doing so, the Issues & Advocacy V.P. shall be responsible for collecting a summary of the prior year's activities and a projection of activities for the coming year from the Legislative Director and the Off Board Specialists. These documents shall be summarized and the summary distributed directly to local Leagues to assist in setting priorities. Present the committee's recommendations to the board for approval.
6. Upon Board approval of priorities, prepare materials for local League use in program planning.
7. Be familiar with and up-to-date on all current action items. When necessary be prepared to act for the Off-Board Specialists,
8. Review NYS Legislative Committee activity and scheduled hearings on a weekly basis and communicate information to the individual responsible for follow-up action and/or developing materials.
9. Review proposed NYS administrative regulations on a weekly basis and communicate information as noted above.

10. Review and edit all internal and external state League issues publications and website. Assist with writing as needed. In the event that there is a short turnaround for production of documents, the Emergency Procedures for the State Issues Committee shall be followed, as described in *GUIDELINES FOR ACTION THROUGH THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE*.
11. Coordinate national League action at the state level. Be sure that appropriate information on action taken is sent to the LWVUS as directed.
12. Oversee periodic regional workshops for local League leaders and members to stimulate interest and activity in action at all levels.
13. Promote, support and assist with fund raising and membership efforts. Provide names of new prospects and make personal contacts when requested. Be aware of opportunities for outside funding and assist with funding proposals as needed.
14. Identify potential leaders on a state, local, or ILO level for nominating committee consideration and board appointments
15. Serve as member of the Education Foundation Board of Directors.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR**

*(Updated July 2008)*

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**        *LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR*

**REPORTS TO:**                *VICE-PRESIDENT/ISSUES AND ADVOCACY*

**OBJECTIVES:**                *TO IMPLEMENT LEAGUE ADVOCACY GOALS IN THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE. TO ADVISE LOCAL LEAGUES ON ADVOCACY METHODS.*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Work with the Vice-President/Issues and Advocacy, Grassroots Director, and Off Board Specialists to promote League issues and advocacy.
2. Serve on the State Issues Committee by following *Action Guidelines and Action through the State Issues Committee Guidelines*.
3. Work with a member of the State Issues Committee in developing an annual plan (see Appendix for *the Format*) related to his/her responsibility and receive approval for the plan from State Board. This plan will include both appropriate education and advocacy items along with a plan to update the website when necessary. By the end of summer, develop a summary of work for the prior year and a proposed plan for next year (see *Appendix for Format*).
4. Lobby legislators, the Governor and their appropriate staff members. Attend pertinent committee meetings and hearings. Promote continued League contact with key legislators and the Governor's office.
5. Monitor the progress of bills on which the League has taken a position. Advise State Issues Committee and/or individual members on appropriate action. It should be noted that during Legislative session, the director and office staff go on line Friday afternoon to see what committees will be meeting the following week and their agendas. In this way the OBS can be advised of potential opportunity for action and can send through the Office staff legislative memos to the appropriate committee chair and sponsors.
6. Work with media to further League visibility and their awareness of League issues. This can be in consultation with the OBS when related to his/her item.
7. Be familiar with state and national League program positions and alert appropriate directors and OBS's to possible opportunities to further League action goals at the state legislative level.
8. Promote local League and member involvement in action via League List Serves and present periodic workshops on action methods for League members (see Appendix for further information regarding *The League and the Legislative Process*).
9. Work with other organizations and advocacy groups, as approved by the board of directors, to help achieve League advocacy goals. (See Guidelines for *Joining Coalitions*)

10. Produce legislative action reports for *State Board Reports* (see Appendix for *Format*) and *Voter*. Produce a bi-weekly summary of activities to be used in Capitol Beat.
11. Promote, support, and assist with fund raising and membership efforts. Provide names of new prospects and make personal contacts when requested. Be aware of the funding potential of League activities and assist with funding proposals as needed.
12. Identify potential leaders on a state, local, or ILO level for nominating committee consideration and board appointments. Mentor a potential replacement for this position.
13. Serve as member of the Education Foundation Board of Directors.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

*(Updated March 2008)*

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**        *LEGISLATIVE ANALYST(S)*

**DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS OR EXPERIENCE:**

*THIS POSITION REQUIRES AN INDIVIDUAL WHO IS A  
LAWYER OR WHO HAS POLICY TRAINING OR EXPERIENCE*

**REPORTS TO:**                *VICE-PRESIDENT/ISSUES & ADVOCACY*

**OBJECTIVES:**

*WORKS WITH STATE AND LOCAL LEAGUE MEMBERS, STATE  
ISSUES COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND OFF-BOARD  
SPECIALISTS TO ASSIST THEM IN FULFILLING THEIR JOBS  
EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY AND TO ASSURE THAT  
LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS  
ACCURATELY REFLECT THE LEAGUE'S POSITIONS.*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Review testimony upon request.
2. Review bills and proposed/final administrative regulations upon request.
3. Assist with public relations materials, website development, and development of training materials,
4. Review and draft language to achieve desired legislative and administrative results,
5. Serve as a member of the State Issues Committee in all matters involving substantive or policy (as opposed to political) considerations to maximize effectiveness of the League's issues and advocacy functions, The Legislative Analyst shall receive notice of all State Issues Committee meetings.
6. Participate in annual planning for the Issues and Advocacy functions following *Action Guidelines* and *Action Through the State Issues Committee*,
7. Review, upon request, proposed consensus questions and positions to assure that the language used is accurate and effectively reflects the consensus so that the final result will effectively propel advocacy in the legislative and administrative arenas
8. Work with other issue & advocacy positions including the Issues and Advocacy Vice President, and Legislative Directors as needed.
9. Promote, support and assist with fundraising and membership efforts,
10. Identify potential leaders on a state, local, or ILO level for nominating committee consideration and board appointments.
11. Serve as member of the Education Foundation Board of Directors.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**  
**GRASSROOTS LOBBY DIRECTOR**

*(Updated March 2008)*

**JOB DESCRIPTION:**            *GRASSROOTS LOBBY DIRECTOR*

**REPORTS TO:**                *VICE-PRESIDENT/ISSUES & ADVOCACY*

**OBJECTIVE:**                *TO ASSIST THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE IN WORKING  
WITH THE LOCAL LEAGUES AND OFF-BOARD SPECIALISTS.*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Serve on the State Issues Committee
2. Assist State Issues Committee and Off Board Specialists in establishing annual League Issues & Advocacy plan and action priorities for board approval following *Action Guidelines* and *Action through the State Issues Committee*.
3. Act as liaison to the local league presidents and local league action chairs for the purpose of urging members to respond to action alerts and lobby their representatives re priority issues.
4. Promote, support and assist with fundraising and membership efforts. Provide names of new prospects and make personal contacts when requested. Work with Development Director in initiating ideas for special projects with fund raising potential.
5. Identify potential leaders on a state, local, or ILO level for nominating committee consideration and board appointments.
6. Serve as member of the Education Foundation Board of Directors.

## **THE ROLE OF A SINGLE ISSUE OFF BOARD SPECIALIST**

*(Updated July 2008)*

### **PLANNING – THE KEY TO SUCCESS**

The League calendar for all activities and report due dates are posted on our website.

In the summer, Off Board Specialists (OBS) plan their Annual Advocacy Calendars in accordance with the calendar their predecessors may have used and in consultation with other members of the State Issues Committee. Forward a copy of the completed calendars to the issues and advocacy vice president.

If this is not your first year on the job, forward to the Vice President/Issues and Advocacy the annual Issues & Advocacy wrap up in the spring for the convention or council reports. (See calendar for due dates)

Over the summer, complete a proposed Issues and Advocacy *Annual Plan* (use *Format contained in Appendix*) for the New Year in your area of specialty. Feel free to consult with the State Issues Committee in designing this plan. Forward a copy of the completed plan to the Vice President/Issues and Advocacy to present to the State September board meeting.

### **TRAINING**

New OBSs should attend a one-day training session in the fall to discuss the job and activities for the upcoming year. Both this event and the subsequent fall planning conference present a wonderful opportunity to get to know other dynamic League leaders from around the State in a casual setting

### **FALL PLANNING CONFERENCE**

Immediately following the fall training session, there will be a fall planning session of the entire issues and advocacy team including all OBS to plan operations for the upcoming year and to develop issue and advocacy priority recommendations for the local Leagues. After this meeting, amend your calendar and plan, if necessary,

### **EDUCATION AND ACTION**

Implement plan and modify as may become necessary. Seek approval from board or State Issues Committee for action and written materials, as is appropriate.

Once the State Issues Committee and/or the board have approved action, follow-up action is primarily the responsibility of the OBS in consultation with the appropriate generalist members

of the State Issues Committee. The Vice President/Issues and Advocacy should be informed promptly of all action taken.

As new written materials are developed, these must be submitted to and approved by the State Issues Committee. Additionally, the president approves all material sent over her/his signature. The document to be approved and the time framework for approval should be submitted to the State Issues Committee, which shall proceed in accordance with *GUIDELINES FOR ACTION THROUGH THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE* located in this manual.

#### *DISTRIBUTION OF APPROVED MATERIAL TO THE PUBLIC AND WITHIN THE LEAGUE*

- Any press releases or other publicly released material issued by coalition partners of the League that are identified as such should be sent by e-mail to the issues vice president and the office.
- Copies of documents sent out under the signature of the President should be forwarded to issues vice president, the Single Issue Off Board Specialist, if any, and the office
- Copies of all other written materials should be sent to the issues and advocacy vice president and the office
- When a press release, letter to the editor or other written material is sent to a local newspaper or directly relates to a local League, a copy should be sent to presidents of the local League(s) in that area so they will be prepared to make a response if necessary. Contact office on how to do this selective email.

#### *League Production of Materials*

When submitting written material for production, please indicate the following:

- To whom final copies are to be sent,
- Date to be completed
- To whom draft copies have already been sent.

#### *MEDIA CONTACT*

In response to events that demand immediate action, informed individuals may initiate and respond to contacts with the media about League action items. A summary of such contacts should be then forwarded to the State Issues Committee for their records.

#### *WEBSITE PLANNING AND UPDATE*

Develop materials as is necessary to assure website conforms to issues and advocacy protocol, contained in this manual, and to assure it is current.

### WRITING FOR LEAGUE PUBLICATIONS

The League has a number of publications to which the OBS should contribute.

- **STATE BOARD REPORTS:** (see Appendix *for format*): This is the summary of League action that is distributed to local League leaders five times a year, although all members have access to the reports since they are on line at the state website. OBS should draft brief summaries of their activities since the last report and forward them to the issues and advocacy vice president, in accordance with an established time schedule as supplied by the calendar on the website.
- **VOTER:** The Voter is the state League's newsletter that is mailed to general membership four times a year. The OBS should communicate with membership by describing past and upcoming educational and advocacy activities and alerting members to new developments and other items of interest in their areas of action. The editor will be glad to help you refine your article and /or will be willing to send it to you before it is printed if editorial changes are made.
- **CAPITOL BEAT:** This is a biweekly newsletter about the goings-on inside Albany. It is newsy, gossipy, and current, with the latest breaking activity in the Capitol. Traditionally, the Legislative Director writes this newsletter. A camera-ready version is prepared for inclusion in local League's newsletters (Voters). Although there is no responsibility to write for this publication, OBSs should feel free to do so if they have news to report that would fit within the format of this publication. Forward contributions to the Vice President/Issues and Advocacy.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE LEAGUE'S ADVOCACY PROCESS**

[This material was drawn, in part, from the NYS Division of Budget's *State Government Structure*, at <http://www.budget.state.ny.us/citizen/structure/structure.html#top>.]  
(Updated July 2008)

### **PARTICIPANTS IN THE LEAGUE ADVOCACY PROCEDURE**

The issues and advocacy function is overseen by the League board with recommendations from the State Issues Committee. All plans and other written documents going out on behalf of the state League must be first approved by the board or the State Issues Committee. The makeup of the committee, time in which it must act, and quorum for purposes of action varies with the time framework involved. Anyone may call a meeting of the State Issues Committee. [For further details, see Guidelines for ACTION THROUGH THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE, in this publication.]

The Single Issue Off-Board Specialists are experts in particular areas but may not have expertise about how government works in Albany. The League has many individuals involved in its education and advocacy operations. Therefore, Single Issue Off-Board Specialists should feel free to call on League generalists such as Issues & Advocacy V.P., the Legislative Director or Legislative Analyst for help they might need in planning or implementing educational and advocacy strategies and activities. On the other hand, some Single Issue Off-Board Specialists come to the League with extensive professional experience in the State government arena. The entire issue and advocacy function is strengthened when those individuals can share their expertise.

The opportunity for advocacy at the state level occurs in many different arenas. This document is a summary of both the League's approach to advocacy and advocacy opportunities in three areas of State government - the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches. It is not a description of the local advocacy process or of public relations as an advocacy tool.

### **LEAGUE POSITIONS – THE BASIS FOR ACTION**

The League is unique among organizations in that it arrives at its grassroots positions after study and consensus among members. These members at the local level study issues that can be implemented at all three levels – national, state, and local. National positions and the history of action under those positions are contained in LWVUS *Impact on Issues*, located on-line at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) (to find, type, Impact On Issues in search). At the state level, these are found in LWVNYS *Impact on Issues*, located on-line at [www.lwvny.org](http://www.lwvny.org) (under Advocacy and Issues).

League action can occur only in support of one or more League positions. If there is not a position to support the proposed action, the League cannot act. Whether or not there is a position to support a proposed action can result in considerable debate, with some League members acting as strict constructionists of our positions and others taking a more organic approach. If

you are unsure of whether a proposed action has a basis in a League position, call a meeting of the State Issues Committee.

### INTERRELATIONSHIP OF STATE AND FEDERAL ACTION

In its advocacy function the League replicates the relationship of our national and state governments in many respects. Some matters are solely within the purview of the LWVUS. This was the case with the LWVNYS's proposed study on whether the State should enter the Compact for a National Popular Vote. LWVUS advised LWVNYS that, although it could study the issue, it could not formulate a state position on this matter because how we elect the President is a matter for a national position only. Similarly, some areas are solely within the purview of state Leagues. In most cases, however, the LWVNYS may take action at a state level under both national and state positions.

### ADVOCACY – A TRIPARTITE APPROACH

The Legislative, Executive, and Judicial branches of our governments all have a hand in making policy. Because they all have different powers, effective advocacy requires an understanding of what each does and how their operations interrelate. The manner in which one lobbies is determined by availability to personnel to be lobbied and the nature of relationships one has developed over the years. Those who live some distance from where decisions are made can nonetheless impact the decision-making process through written correspondence, telephone conversations, conference call meetings, action alerts, and working with League members in Albany or other areas where activity is taking place. In addition, one can establish a relationship with the State representatives through their local office and staff where the OBS lives.

#### The Executive Branch

The Governor is the State's chief executive, with offices in the second floor of the Capitol. He/she oversees 20 state departments, which are responsible for the day-to-day operation of state government. (See *Appendix for List of State Agencies*)

With a few exceptions, the Governor appoints the heads of all State departments and agencies of the executive branch. The remaining agency employees are civil service appointees. The exceptions include:

- The Commissioner of the State Education Department, who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the State Board of Regents.
- The Chancellor of the State University of New York, who is appointed by a Board of Trustees.
- The Chancellor of the City University of New York, who is appointed by a Board of Trustees.

The Budget Process Items **WITH financial impact.** (See Appendix for more detailed information about *The Budget Process.*)

Article VII of the New York State Constitution gives the Governor power to develop and introduce the State budget to the Legislature. Although the Legislature must ultimately pass a budget, it has limited power to alter the Governor's proposal. To the extent that new programs or amendments of existing programs have financial implications at the State level, they must be addressed in the budgetary process through the Governor's Article VII. The Assembly and Senate negotiate with the governor until an agreement on the budget is reached. This negotiation affects the ultimate outcome for most programs that the League is concerned about

Governor's Program Bills: Items **WITHOUT financial impact**

In addition to budget bills, the Governor will often introduce program bills on subjects supported by the League. These bills are on subjects that have no immediate financial impact on the State and, thus, do not have to be resolved in the contest of budget negotiations. Recent examples include ethics reform and lobbying reform. If there is an established relationship with the Governor's office, the League may be asked to consult on content prior to the bill's introduction. Otherwise, one would respond to it in the same way that one would respond to any other bill introduced into the Legislature. In addition, one might voice support or concerns directly to the Governor or top staff.

Signing Bills

During the legislative session, the governor has ten days to sign or veto bills that the legislature has passed and sent to him. The governor often seeks the opinion of special or public interest groups on these measures. When the governor's office sends such bills to the state League for comment or when the League may wish to provide unsolicited input to the Governor, it must respond within very strict time limits.

On receipt of these bills from the governor's office, or if independent action is proposed, the individual involved calls an immediate meeting of the State Issues Committee by forwarding the bill and proposed action, if any is suggested. In considering the appropriate action, the State Issues Committee shall assign a person or persons to draft the appropriate response.

Administrative Regulations

Much legislation is administered by a State administrative agency overseen by the Governor. In conjunction with granting the agency oversight of the legislation, it will often give the administering agency power to promulgate (adopt) administrative regulations. Good legislation can be sabotaged by bad administrative regulations; conversely, poor legislation can be improved through the regulatory process. Regulations are promulgated after a period for public comment. Because regulations can be so critical to the success of legislation, the League should be prepared to review and offer

comment on regulations proposed in issue areas it follows. (See Appendix for more information about *The Rule Making Process*.)

### Lobbying Opportunities: the Executive Branch

Generally speaking, lobbying opportunities for the League come in **three forms**.

- **First**, one can develop a relationship with Executive employees (the Governor's chief staff members and top level agency employees). This relationship enables one to discuss policy matters having budget implications with the appropriate employee, whether by personal appearance, phone call, or letter, prior to the time at which agencies begin to develop their budget proposals (generally June to September or October) Once the Governor's budget is introduced, the Governor has 21 days to submit amendments. If you are going to take an active role in the budget process, get a copy of budget documents and review those relevant to your area of expertise. One can suggest amendments to the Executive Department within the 21 day time period and throughout the time period during which the budget is being negotiated with the Legislature.
- **Second**, independent of the budget, the Governor may at any time during the session submit program bills on matters without statewide financial implications. Discussions with his/her office and the appropriate agency personnel can be ongoing.
- **Third**, the League can comment on proposed regulations. Check the on-line Administrative Register for proposed regulations, and be sure to note the time period for comment. Determine, in consultation with the State Issues Committee, whether the League should submit comment.

A final word is given about dealing with the Governor's office and administrative agencies. One should not plan on lobbying at this level without a certain level of policy expertise because lobbying often consists of a discussion of the consequences of differing policies. The devil is always in the details, and if you plan to lobby at this level, you must be aware of the details. If you are not aware of them, there are many League resources to assist you, including the Issues and Advocacy Vice President, the Legislative Director, and the Legislative Analyst. Don't worry if you do not have the expertise. Often the League will work in coalition with agencies that have developed such expertise, and we are sometimes asked to participate by virtue of our affiliation. If given the opportunity, enjoy it and learn from it. As you continue to work in a particular area, you will soon become an expert on the issues and the personalities involved.

### **The Legislative Branch**

New York's legislature is bicameral, consisting of a 62 member Senate and a 150 member Assembly. All members are elected for two year terms.

The Budget Process (See Appendix for more detailed information about *The Budget Process*.)

Once the Governor has introduced the proposed budget, the Senate and Assembly hold joint legislative hearings about the proposed budget in a number of program areas. League Directors and Off-Board Specialists will often testify at these hearings if the

budget proposals are about matters that are League priorities. To get a schedule of budget hearings, go on-line to the Assembly or Senate website. One must call to request a spot for testimony. Those not wishing to testify in person may submit written testimony within 10 days after the hearing.

Remember that in **preparing testimony**, it is unlike the concise legislative memos, in that this testimony can provide an opportunity to argue your case. Do not be afraid to do it in some detail, citing outside material, studies, and scholarly articles.

The time during which the budget is negotiated is a time of frenetic activity when lobbyists of all stripes and members of a myriad of interest groups flock to Albany to make known their views. They talk to legislators and deliver memos in support of discrete pieces of legislation and organizational positions in general. The League is no different. Remember when **talking to and preparing materials** for legislators, make them as concise and to the point as possible.

Non-Budget Bills

In addition to budget bills, the legislature considers a number of bills supported by the League that have no financial implications. Many of these are introduced repeatedly year after year.

Identify bills in your issue area and determine which have previously drafted memos in support or opposition. If you believe a new measure will be introduced, draft a memo in support or opposition as soon as you hear of the content. Depending on the time framework, the memo will need approval by the State Issues Committee in advance of distribution.

Occasionally you will become aware of bills relating to League positions after they have been introduced. In this case, go on-line to obtain the bill. Review League positions with the assistance of the State Issues Committee and Legislative Analyst to determine whether the League should take a position on the bill. Draft a proposed memo if appropriate and call a meeting of the State Issues Committee to approve the proposed action.

Once a bill has been introduced, it is assigned to committee. Legislative memos should be distributed to Chairs and members of the Committee to which it has been assigned and to the Speaker and Minority Leader of the Assembly and the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate, if introduced in both houses. You can determine the

Committee to which it is assigned by looking up the bill's legislative history when you obtain it on-line. Often a bill for which there is not bipartisan support will pass one house and die in committee in the other house.

### **The Judicial Branch**

The League can also in limited instances engage in advocacy through the courts. This occurs when the League commences litigation as a plaintiff, attempts to join existing action as a party, or seeks to have a say in ongoing litigation by submission of an *Amicus Curiae* brief. Because of the protracted nature and cost of most litigation, the League does not undertake such action lightly or frequently. However, especially in the context of our coalition activity, the issue of becoming involved in litigation does come up. Any decision to move forward in this arena must

be made by the board upon recommendation of the State Issues Committee. In cases of a limited time framework in which to act, board action may be obtained by written consent in lieu of a meeting. Any person seeking approval to pursue legal action should call a meeting of the State Issues Committee.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION BY OFF-BOARD SPECIALIST**

*(Updated July 2008)*

An item may be approved for action in one of three ways:

- As part of the annual action plan;
- By approval of the board of directors upon recommendation of the State Issues Committee;
- By approval of the State Issues Committee when there is not adequate time for approval by the board of directors.

The nature of approval is determined by the time framework involved.

### **A. Annual Planning**

The summer is the best time for each individual involved in the Issues and Advocacy function (including OBS) to complete the Annual Plan Checklist, which shall constitute her/his anticipated work plan for the upcoming year. (See appendix for *I & A Annual Plan Worksheet*.) All worksheets should be returned to the Vice President of Issues and Advocacy, who shall compile them into a proposed annual plan which will be presented to the State Board at their September meeting and sent to local Leagues' Presidents and their Action VP thereafter.

The local Leagues will then rank the issues in order of priority to them and return their rankings to the Issues and Advocacy Vice President, who shall compile the results. When this process is completed by early fall, the State Issues Committee and all Off-Board Specialists shall meet in November to finalize the Education and Action Plan and Action Agenda (formerly known as Legislative Priorities) for the upcoming year. The Action Agenda will thus consist of those items or areas recommended for priority treatment. The final Plan and Agenda shall be presented to the board for approval at its November meeting by the Issues and Advocacy Vice President. To the extent that previously-introduced bills will again be introduced, or administrative regulations are anticipated, they can be adopted as issue items as part of the annual planning process.

Once an item is reflected in the Plan or Agenda, an individual is designated who will oversee the development of materials. If the item on the Agenda is one covered by an Off Board Specialist then that person will be responsible. If it is one covered by a board member then that person will be responsible. If there is nobody who would naturally assume responsibility, the State Issues Committee shall either seek another Off Board Specialist or appoint one of its members to handle it.

This designated person shall determine what additional materials need to be developed in support of the item. These might include reports, position papers,

educational materials, updating of the League website, preparation of legislative memos and testimony in support of proposed legislation, preparation of administrative memos and testimony in support of proposed administrative action.

The person responsible for development of the item shall:

- involve members of the State Issues Committee in development as may be necessary;
- provide written materials to the League President and the Issues and Advocacy Vice President, both of whom must approve the materials;
- Prepare a proposal for developing/updating the website in accordance with the Issues and Advocacy Website Template.

Once the materials have been approved, the Issues and Advocacy Vice President shall take steps, as may be necessary, to see that they are published, distributed, and put on the website.

**B. Board Action**

When an item arises after the annual planning process but with sufficient advance notice so that action can be proposed and taken with board approval, the person responsible for the item shall develop materials as in “A” and bring them to the State Issues Committee, which shall report to the board with a recommendation. After board approval, if any, the materials shall be disseminated and action taken in accordance with “A”, or as may be otherwise directed by the board.

**C. State Issues Committee Action**

The State Issues Committee is authorized by the board to act on issue and advocacy matters when action must be taken or materials developed prior to the next board meeting. In these cases, the State Issues Committee decides what action may be taken. In all cases, the GUIDELINES FOR ACTION THROUGH THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE shall be followed. The person seeking action shall prepare materials and call a meeting of the State Issues Committee.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION THROUGH THE STATE ISSUES COMMITTEE**

(Updated July 2008)

The board of directors bears the ultimate responsibility for all action decisions made by LWVNYS. The board must assure itself that League positions support the action to be taken. In controversial matters, the board must determine that it has the understanding and agreement of local Leagues.

The board has established procedures for delegating these responsibilities to the State Issues Committee consisting of the vice president/ issues and advocacy, legislative director, legislative analyst, grassroots lobby director and the appropriate off-board specialists. The president is an *ex officio* member of the committee, meaning that he/she receives notice of meetings and can participate in discussion but does not vote. Although the Legislative Analyst acts only in matters involving substantive or policy (as opposed to political) considerations, he/she receives notice of all meetings. For those meetings in which participation is inappropriate, the legislative analyst may elect to remove him or herself or be removed as a matter of procedure by failure to respond by the designated time in which to respond. Off board specialists shall be given notice only of meetings dealing with their areas of expertise.

**“Calling a meeting”** consists of emailing the State Issues Committee, the President and the office staff with the relevant details. Clearly state your goals, the position you are advocating for, what action you wish to take, your deadline by which must receive an answer. **All on-line discussion** related to an Action Issue should be responded to by **REPLY ALL**. After all participants respond, the V.P. Issues and Advocacy will email the final decision so that the OBS can then proceed.

### **Action Requiring Board Approval**

All action that requires board approval should be decided based on discussion by and recommendations from the State Issues Committee. Other members of the board should be informed immediately of the decision. Types of action requiring approval of the full board include the following:

- Major action, such as mass mailings, lawsuits, and action plans requiring significant commitments of staff time and League money.
- Joining coalitions.

In cases of action requiring full board approval, no action shall be taken until board approval has been obtained.

### **State Issues Committee Procedures**

The State Issues Committee screens bills, regulations, and other proposed governmental actions for potential action based on the following criteria:

- Basis in state or national League position,
- Substantial likelihood of receiving legislative attention,
- Potential for heightening League visibility,
- Timeliness,
- Long-term commitment, and;
- Building a constituency.

The State Issues Committee also screens League publications for content, as reflected in the guidelines and style pages.

### **Legislation, Regulations, or other Governmental Action, Which League Has Supported/Opposed in the Past – No State Issues Committee Approval Necessary**

If the League has previously taken a position, no further review is necessary barring a change in League position. Previously written materials, such as memos, testimony, or other publications that are in the League files can be accessed, adapted to the current proposed activity and re-circulated. To use these materials, the specialist submits an updated memo or other document to the office staff and asks that it be delivered to the appropriate legislators/committees or other individuals. Care should be taken to ensure that no major changes have been made in the bill, regulations, or other proposal. Timely notification of action taken should be made to the president, issues vice president and legislative director.

The specialist may decide on a verbal acknowledgement of support in response to inquiries rather than a memo.

### **Legislation, Regulations or other League Action (Including Approval of Written Materials) Having No League History**

Any League member wishing the State Issues Committee to have a meeting about a potential action item on which the League has no previous history of supporting or opposing may call such a meeting. Members of the State Issues Committee may convene a meeting by sending notice and relevant materials to members of the committee. The preferred method of communication is e-mails, using THE “REPLY ALL” button, with telephone conversations or conference calls as may be necessary. The procedures followed by the committee will be determined by the time framework for approval.

- One Week or More  
Send bill, regulations, or description of matter on which action is proposed, along with analysis in format provided by the *Legislative Memo format* (See appendix) to the State Issues Committee Staff by e-mail. If a bill memo, proposed testimony, or other materials have been prepared, attach them. The e-mail should state the date and time by which action is needed. Members who have not responded within the time for action

shall be deemed to have removed themselves from the committee for purposes of the matter under consideration. Decision is by simple majority of those participating in the decision, with at least three members necessary for a quorum.

- Less than One Week and More than 24 Hours

Follow the procedures above, except that to the extent that time does not permit the completion of the Legislative Memo format????? Provide the proposed action, justification in League position, and any supportive materials that have been developed. The decision process shall proceed as above.

- 24 Hours or Less

The nature of the notice shall be determined by the turnaround time. If it is possible to e-mail notice to the State Issues Committee, the person seeking approval shall do so. Otherwise, the person seeking approval shall obtain the consent of the President to take action in consultation with one or more members of the State Issues Committee, as designated by the president. This emergency procedure is designated to give the League the flexibility to function in the legislative arena, where matters are often introduced and resolved without advance notice.

### **REPORT TO THE BOARD**

If the vice president/Issues and Advocacy participates in the meeting and a recommendation for action is made, he/she shall note the date of the meeting, the date by which a decision must be reached, participants, and the result. If the VP is not a participant in the discussion, another member of the permanent State Issues Committee should be designated to prepare report to the board. (See Job Description of VP)

The issues and advocacy vice president (or her designee on the permanent State Issues Committee) shall report all decisions of the State Issues Committee to the board after the decision was made. The board retains the right to overrule any decision of the State Issues Committee on a going-forward basis.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

*(Updated March 2008)*

1. Local Leagues can lobby only their own congressional representative and the two U.S. senators.
2. LWVNYS can lobby only the New York congressional delegation and the two senators from New York.
3. Local Leagues and the state League can respond directly to LWVUS Calls to Action or Action Alerts.

### **Local League Action on National Items NOT in response to LWVUS Calls to Action or Action Alerts**

- Action approval: Consult with LWVUS as to League position, priority status, previous LWVUS action, and strategy.
- Content approval: State Issues Committee

### **LWVNYS Action on National Items NOT in response to LWVUS Calls to Action or Action Alerts**

- Off-Board Specialist consults with LWVUS as to League position, priority status, previous LWVUS action, and strategy.
- Content approval: State Issues Committee

**GUIDELINES FOR SIGNING LETTERS**  
**AND ISSUING PRESS RELEASES**

*(Updated March 2008)*

The LWVNYS Board has established procedures for Off-Board Specialists and other league leaders to sign on to letters, press releases, etc. on issues that relate to our positions as outlined in “Impact on Issues.”

1. Anything to be signed must be sent to the State Issues Committee, which consists of the Issues and Advocacy Vice-President, Legislative Director, Grassroots Director, Legislative Analyst, and the particular Off-Board Specialist, if any. A copy should also be sent to the President and Executive Director.
2. When the item is sent to the State Issues Committee, the sender must indicate the date and time by which approval is sought. The State Issues Committee shall treat the sending of material as the call for an emergency meeting and the procedures shall be determined by the time framework involved. [See *Guidelines for Action through the State Issues Committee.*] The Issues and Advocacy Vice President, or her/his designee, shall immediately inform the sender of the State Issue Committee’s decision.
3. Upon the recommendation of the State Issues Committee, the President must sign any writing from LWVNYS.

## **GUIDELINES FOR JOINING COALITIONS**

*(Updated March 2008)*

In deciding whether or not to join a coalition, the following things should be considered:

1. Does the coalition have well-defined goals?
2. Are the coalition goals the same as LWV goals?
3. Are sufficient people and monetary resources available?
4. Is this a League priority?
5. Is the extent of League participation clear?
6. Will the League's nonpartisan policy be compromised?
7. Will the coalition enhance LWV visibility?
8. Will the coalition be limited to the agreed upon issue(s)?
9. Does the coalition leadership respect coalition goals and process?

The League should be certain that all press releases, letters and other material circulated to the public by the coalition will be approved by the League representative to the coalition or the League president in advance of publication.

Local Leagues joining coalitions on statewide issues must inform and get approval from the state board.

Local League boards should review and approve the joining of statewide or local coalitions. If the League is a member of an ILO, the local League should advise the other Leagues in the area of this desire to join the coalition.

## **COALITION BUILDING**

*(Updated March 2008)*

A coalition is a cooperative arrangement between two or more organizations united by a common position on a single issue.

### **Why are coalitions useful?**

1. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) that work together can accomplish more with fewer resources.
2. Money spent and a resource used by one group is augmented by the money and NGO of the other.
3. The connections and relationships of each NGO are enhanced.
4. By finding the right partner, an NGO can double its resources and work.

**What are the risks?**

1. Always be sure that a potential coalition partner is working towards the same goal. Read their bylaws and their mission statement.
2. Be sure that your partner will bring your NGO real benefits. Does the other group have a good reputation? Many members? Effective Leaders? A sound budget? A good communications network and PR?

**How do you build a coalition?**

1. Coalition building is not hard. Meet with other groups and educate them about your organization.
2. Find out everything about their organization, (structure, funding, history, mission, etc.)
3. Main Steps:
  - a. Identify potential partners (nearby local leagues, ILO's in your area, American Association of University Women, NYPIRG, Common Cause, local colleges and universities, etc.)
  - b. Educate them and yourself about the issues. Go to each other's meetings.
  - c. Meet with your prospective partners and plan the program/project. Be clear about your goals and mission.
  - d. Activate your coalition by assigning tasks, responsibilities and cost sharing.
  - e. Assign tasks and be clear about who is doing what? Have deadlines. It is a good idea to have co-chairs, one from each organization to be responsible for checking on their own people as to deadlines, completions, etc. Sponsor public forums together. Write a proposal for a joint project.

**Principles for successful coalitions:**

The purpose of the coalition must be clearly stated and widely understood. Coalition partners must see each other on a regular basis and plan strategies, activities, or projects together. Each member of a coalition must participate in a meaningful way. Don't just talk about it. Do it!

## **LWVNYS MAILING LISTS**

*(Updated November 2009)*

A list serve is a collection of the e-mail addresses of League members who perform similar functions around the state. They are easy ways to send communications, documents, and to **engage in ad hoc two-way discussions** about various matters affecting your portfolio. Below are the different list serves that the State League uses in spreading the word to local leagues and their chairs. To put material on the List Serve:

1. The process is the same as you use when you send email to any one in your own address book. Below are the addresses you will use.
2. Each local league office holder and all Off-Board Specialists have automatically been put on the following list serves by the State office staff from lists supplied by Local Leagues. It is important that these lists be current, reflecting any changes that take place after annual meetings.
3. Prepare your message and attach it to an email. Documents must be “attached” so they do not lose their formatting.
4. Send the email directly to the relevant list serve you have selected from list below.

### LWVNYS MAILING LISTS

- LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeaguePresidents@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeaguePresidents@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleaguepresidents\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleaguepresidents_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeagueMembership@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeagueMembership@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleaguemembership\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleaguemembership_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE ISSUES & ADVOCACY  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeagueIssuesandAdvocacy@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeagueIssuesandAdvocacy@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleagueissuesandadvocacy\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleagueissuesandadvocacy_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE VOTER SERVICE  
E-mail Address: [localLeagueVoterService@lwny.org](mailto:localLeagueVoterService@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleaguevoterservice\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleaguevoterservice_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE PROGRAM AND EDUCATION  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeagueProgramandEducation@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeagueProgramandEducation@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleagueprogramandeducation\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleagueprogramandeducation_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeagueFinanceandDevelopment@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeagueFinanceandDevelopment@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleaguefinanceanddevelopment\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleaguefinanceanddevelopment_lwny.org/archive)
- LOCAL LEAGUE BULLETIN EDITORS  
E-mail Address: [LocalLeagueBulletinEditors@lwny.org](mailto:LocalLeagueBulletinEditors@lwny.org)  
To View Archived Messages: [Localleaguebulletineditors\\_lwny.org/archive](http://Localleaguebulletineditors_lwny.org/archive)

## APPENDICES

### I. Formats to be Used in Preparing Materials

#### ISSUES AND ADVOCACY ANNUAL PLAN WORKSHEET

*(Updated July 2008)*

Please complete this worksheet for each issue in which you wish to be active or for which you anticipate action over the next year. Be as specific as possible, as these worksheets will be incorporated into the League's Annual Plan and Action Agenda. They will provide you with a calendar for your year's activities, and they will also form the basis for wrap-up reporting at the close of the year's advocacy. Of course, use only that item listed below that is appropriate for your issue.

**ISSUE:** *(State Succinctly specific item)*

**ANTICIPATED ACTION:**

- Recommended Priorities (based on wrap-up of prior session and beliefs about potential areas of success in future legislative session):
- Research needed to support League Advocacy:
- Education activities recommended including use of List Serves:
- Advocacy activities recommended:
  - Legislative bills
    - Bills (list nature or prior number):
    - Testimony (State whether testimony exists or needs to be developed.):
    - Bill Memos (State whether memo exists or needs to be developed.):
    - Develop and Distribute Materials and to whom?
    - Face to Face Lobbying( locally or in Albany; how Legislative Director fits in)
    - Cap Wiz Action Alerts: Using CATT
    - Other:
  - Administrative Regulations
    - Regulations (List anticipated regulations.)
    - Testimony (State whether exists or needs to be developed.)
    - Develop and Distribute Materials and to whom?
    - Face to Face Lobbying (If possible, state who will be lobbied and time framework.):
    - Cap Wiz Action Alerts: Using CATT
    - Other:

- Coalitions
  - Current:
  - Suggested to Join:
  
- Public Relations
  - Press Conferences (If possible, list timing.):
  - Op-Ed Pieces (If possible, list timing.):
  - Letters to the Editor (If possible, list timing.):
  - TV and Radio Appearances (If possible, list timing.):
  - Speaking Engagements (If possible, list timing.)
  - Other:
  
- Reporting
  - State Board Report
  - Voter
  - Capitol Beat
  - Annual Report in April for Convention/Council
  - 
  - Periodic Reporting to Issues and Advocacy Vice President (state frequency and whether by telephone conversation or written report)
  
- Document Update
  - Website
  - “Impact on Issues”

## **ISSUES & ADVOCACY YEAR END REPORT WORKSHEET**

The purpose of this Year End report is two-fold:

1. It provides a summary of what you accomplished for reporting to the Board for Convention or Council and the basis for developing the Annual Plan for the next year.
2. It provides your successor a history upon which her/his new plans can be based.

### **A. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- a. PROGRAMS HELD:
- b. PUBLICATIONS DEVELOPED (include copies)
- c. WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT
- d. OTHER ACTIVITIES
- e. ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSES, FAILURES, AND PROGNOSIS FOR UPCOMING YEAR

### **B. ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES**

- a. ISSUES LOBBIED
- b. BILLS SUPPORTED AND OPPOSED (list numbers, describe, and attach)
- c. MEMO(S) WRITTEN (attach)
- d. TESTIMONY WRITTEN (attach)
- e. OTHER MATERIALS DEVELOPED (attach)
- f. OTHER ACTIVITIES (describe)
- g. ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSES, FAILURES, AND PROGNOSIS FOR UPCOMING YEAR

## **FORMAT FOR LEGISLATIVE MEMOS**

*(Updated July 2008)*

A memo is essential when legislative action is imminent or when a priority issue is involved. When considering the best course of action, you must weigh the importance of the issue and the optimal timing.

### **Approval for Memos for legislation about which League has NO prior history**

Approval of final wording is the responsibility of the State Issues Committee.

### **How Many and to Whom?**

Decide who should get the memo and how many are needed. The following might be included: sponsors, governor's counsel, press, Senate and Assembly majority and minority leaders, chairs of appropriate committees, staff members, committee members, entire Senate or Assembly.

Usually a memo is first distributed to the members of a committee when it appears on the committee agenda. Later, when a vote of the full chamber appears imminent (3rd Reading, no star), the memo is distributed to the entire chamber and the press. LWVUS and the New York State Library receive copies of all LWVNYS memos, as do the board and others who have requested them, such as Senate Bill Operations.

### **Format**

Memos are run on special "memo" letterhead supplied by Office staff when you send the memo to the Office after it has been reviewed by the State Issues Committee.

Use the following format:

IN SUPPORT OF: (or IN OPPOSITION TO :)

A.000 Sponsor(s) or S.000 Sponsor(s)

*Subject: Brief description of bill (which you can find on the Assembly or Senate website when you are looking at the bill language)*

Begin immediately with the reason we support or oppose the bill. The following paragraphs can expand on the opening statement. Be as succinct as possible; stay within a page. Assume the readers already know something about the bill.

Only one bill should be handled in a memo. Very similar bills can be addressed together but should be described and listed separately.

### **Items to be Included**

*(Note: Much of this information can be found on the Legislature website under the bill)*

- Title of Bill with Sponsors and Numbers
- Purpose or General Idea of bill
- Summary of Specific Provisions of Bill
- Points in Favor of taking action at this time OR Points against taking the proposed action
- Fiscal implications when a budget bill

## **STATE BOARD REPORTS FORMAT**

(Updated July 2008)

The "*State Board Report*" (SBR) is our main link with local League boards and through them to members. Generally, the SBR is used for material that is timely, whereas descriptions of how to do something (i.e., conduct an annual meeting or produce an interesting bulletin) appear in the publication: *In League in New York State*.

The State Board Reports from Off-Board Specialists are to be sent to the V.P. for Issues & Advocacy and the Office. If there is no State Board Report for that period, send a note to the V.P. advising her. Keep in mind that State Board Reports can be used for educational purposes, as well as advocacy.

Each board member and Off-Board Specialist is responsible for the accuracy of her material. In writing, keep in mind the following considerations:

- Are you clear enough for novices? Are action ideas, study ideas or ways to involve the membership included? Are flyers and other publications promoted? Where can further information be found?
- Has all action taken at the state level been explained? Has linkage with our consensus or previous action been made clear? Has enough background been given to stimulate local League action?
- Are ideas from other Leagues shared and praises distributed? Are ideas or requests from national reinforced?
- Material to be reproduced should be clear, legible, and concise. Please consult *Style Sheet in this manual*. Watch spelling and punctuation. Please do not rely on office staff to look up information, fill in blanks, and correct spelling. Send by email one copy to the office and a copy to the State Issues Committee.
- Camera-ready copy can be duplicated in the office after approved by the State Issues Committee. These documents should be **sent as attachments** because if they are sent as an e-mail document, all formatting will be deleted when copying over to Word.
- Limit reports to one page, two sides.

The following format should be used for the first page:

TO: Local League President and (Item) Directors  
 FROM: Mary Smith Off-Board Specialist for (list portfolio)  
 120 Main Street, Anywhere, NY 11111  
 E-Mail: (your email address here)

**TITLE OF REPORT (All capitals, centered bolded and underlined)**

**Subtitles Should Be Underlined With Initial Capitals**

Text follows on the next line. Skip line between paragraphs. Do not indent paragraphs

Set up your copy as you would like it to appear (margins, caps, underlines, spacing, etc.).

Include testimony, newspaper articles, editorials, flyers, or other extra sheets with your report if the extra material is new or particularly useful. Otherwise summarize contents in your own words. Acknowledge all sources.

**Proofread your work before you submit it. Deadlines should be strictly adhered to.**

The font used is Times Roman 12 pt

Tab set after 1" margin is every 1/2"

**A reminder: for punctuation rules, see “Style Sheet” in appendix.**

**FORMAT FOR CATT [Citizen Action Toolkit] /**  
**ACTION ALERT SUBMISSION**  
*(July 2008)*

Send State Issues Committee your Action Alert following the format below.

Once reviewed and approved by the State Issues Committee, YOU send your Action Alert to the State Office to be put on the CATT list.

- Tell the office how long you want this on the Action Alert list (i.e. until end of legislative session? Two weeks? Etc.) This goes to over 2600 recipients [this exceeds our state League membership] so your representative letter cannot say “as a member of the LWV”, but can say “as your constituent”.
- Tell the office whom you want to be contacted: all assembly members and/or all senate members or a select group—perhaps a committee or individual.
- Format is in three parts:
  1. Part I is a succinct title to attract attention on the email title and the Action Alert title.
  2. Part II is a relatively short letter to the relevant representative urging support/opposition with the bill number and most important reasons. This goes immediately onto the website.
  3. Part III is more detailed background that one may want to know regarding the issue. This is posted as an email message to everyone who signed up for CATT with a link to the website.

**EXAMPLE:**

- **ACTION ALERT:** Help victims of domestic violence.  
Urge your Senator to request Senate leadership to put the Family Court Act (S.6783) on the Senate active list for a vote in this session and to vote in favor of it.
- *(Senator Letter) [Office will put this on Capwiz/CATT website immediately]*  
As one of your constituents, I strongly urge you to request the Senate leadership to put S.6783 (Winner) on the active list for a vote in this session and support its passage. This bill seeks to amend the Family Court Act to permit issuance of orders of protection against unrelated persons. Etc...
- **BACKGROUND:** *[Office will put this on email being sent to League members]*  
New York is currently the only state that does **not** permit unrelated persons to obtain a civil order of protection. For almost 20 years this bill has passed the Assembly and failed to move out of the Senate Judiciary committee. At last, in April this bill moved from the Judiciary committee to the calendar of the Senate. We cannot let it die there! The time has come to urge passage on the Expanded Access Bill S.6783 sponsored by Sen. Winner and co-sponsored by Senators Robach, LaValle, Morohan and Nozzolio. ETC....

## **STYLE SHEET**

Basic Style Book: *A Manual of Style*, University of Chicago Press. Fifteenth Edition

### **PUNCTUATION – CAPITALIZATION - TIPS**

#### **Commas**

1. A dependent introductory clause of at least four words that precedes the main clause should usually be set off by a comma:

If you accept our conditions, we shall agree to a constitutional convention.  
After reading the note, Shirley turned pale.

The comma is usually omitted after a short introductory clause:  
On Tuesday she tried to see the mayor.  
For many years the committee had refused to move.

2. In a one word series, separate the words by commas except for the last two when they are joined by a conjunction (and, but, or, nor...):  
Attending the conference were Merrins, Robinson and Kennedy.

If the series is of more than one word, use a comma to separate the last words:  
The developer, the owner, and the cautious mayor were having an acrimonious discussion.

3. Between adjectives in a series or pair, use a comma if the adjectives are of equal importance-that is, if they could sensibly be connected by the word "and":  
a tired, disillusioned politician; quick, easy solutions.

Otherwise, do not use a comma:  
a gray iron cot; a wiry old taxi driver.

#### **Colon**

1. A colon is commonly used to introduce a list or a series. In ordinary writing the first word after a colon is not capitalized if what follows is not a complete sentence.  
There were three considerations: expense, time, and feasibility.

If a complete sentence follows, capitalize the first word:  
He promised this: The state will make good all the losses.

2. Avoid using a colon with the word "including." Instead, place a comma before the word.  
The League published several books, including *A Guide to New York State Government*, *The Judicial Maze*, and *Women & the Law*.

3. A long quote uses a colon to introduce quotations although a comma is enough to introduce a short quote that remains within the paragraph.

### Semicolon

1. Use a semicolon between the two parts of a compound sentence when they are not connected by a conjunction:

The political poster was removed from the wall; in its place was hung a realistic landscape.

When two independent clauses are linked by a transitional expression such as for example (e.g.), namely, or that is (i.e.), use a semicolon before the expression and a comma afterward:

She is highly qualified for the job; i.e., she has had ten years' experience as a research chemist.

2. When adverbs are used rather than conjunctions to connect the clauses of a compound sentence, a semicolon precedes them. The following words are considered adverbs-then, however, thus, hence, indeed, yet, so:

Mary was out of the office when I called; so, I left a message.

OR

Mary was out of the office when I called, and so I left a message.

3. When items in a series are long and complex or involve internal punctuation, they should be separated by semicolons for the sake of clarity:

The membership of the commission was as follows: New York 5; New Jersey 4; Maryland 3; California 7.

### Dashes

1. The dash is used when what follows is a series punctuated by commas:

The administration will face many problems--unemployment, school segregation, falling revenue, and rising administrative costs--during this session of the legislature.

2. Dashes are used to indicate sudden breaks in thought and speech:

Will she--can she--get the necessary signatures?

The petitions--where did you put them?

Consensus--that is the will--o--the--wisp--they doggedly pursued.

### Quotation Marks

1. Commas and the periods are always placed inside the quotation mark. Colons and semicolons are always placed outside the final quotation mark. No period is used when the quoted sentence is a question:

She asked her friend, "What is your goal?"

2. If the quotation is of more than one paragraph, quotation marks are used at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last paragraph. That is, quotation marks are not used at the end of any paragraph except the last one.

Yes and no. Quotation marks only if used in direct conversation:  
Millie always answered yes; she could not bring herself to say no.

3. A block quotation where the quoted material is set off from the text in a block is not enclosed in quotation marks. Letters and quoted material of more than one paragraph are usually set in block quotations, avoiding the use of quotation marks.

### Hyphens

The current trend is to avoid hyphens in words, which are frequently used (e.g., nonpartisan). Retain the hyphen to avoid ambiguity and to connect two adjectives used in a single expression before a noun (e.g., heavy-hearted man). If not before a noun, do not use a hyphen. Do not use a hyphen with any ly adverb (e.g., closely watched trial).

### Apostrophe

Write the following words without the conventional apostrophe:

candidates meeting	speakers bureau
candidates questionnaire	voters service
citizens committee	voters guide

### Numbers

1. In general, spell out the first nine numbers: use figures for numbers above nine except when they begin a sentence. In some cases, spelling out is appropriate:

Five to six thousand voted.  
He said his opponent was a hundred percent wrong.

2. When writing dates use figures. Omit the comma after the year.

June 27 (not June 27<sup>th</sup>)  
The League took action at its April 1, 1995 meeting.

3. Legislative bill numbers are always underlined: S.120
4. Where money is cited, do not use zeros after the decimal unless pennies are included:  
Dues were \$40. (not \$40.00).

**Time of Day**

Use lower case a.m. and p.m. or am and pm. 8 p.m. is better than 8:00 p.m. Avoid the redundancy of 10:30 a.m. in the morning and Thursday night at 7:00 p.m.

**Capitalization**

Criteria for capitalization are consistency, emphasis, clarity, and appearance. Consistency should be maintained at all costs.

1. Omit the period between initial letters in an organization's title: PTA, LWV, AFL-CIO, and YMCA.
2. Reverend and Honorable are spelled out if preceded by the: the Reverend Henry L. Brown; the Reverend Mr. Brown
  - If "the" does not precede Reverend or Honorable, the title is abbreviated when the full name is used:  
Rev. Henry L. Brown; Hon. Robert Dole
  - If the full name is not given, use Mr. Brown (never Reverend Brown).
3. Titles followed by a personal name are always capitalized. Titles used alone, in place of a personal name, are usually lowercased:
  - Pope John XXIII; the pope
  - Secretary of State General Colin Powell; the secretary
  - Governor Patterson; the governor; governor of the state of New York
  - George Bush, president of the United States; President Bush; the president; the presidency
4. The words state, county, town, city, and village are capitalized when they follow the name, but not if they stand alone or come before the name:
  - New York State; the state of New York, the state
  - Orange County; the county of Orange; the county
  - New York City; the city of New York; the city
  - the village of Croton-on-Hudson; the village
  - seasons of the year: not capitalized
5. Judicial and governmental bodies' full names are capitalized, and so too are many adjectives derived from them and also incomplete designations:
  - United States Congress; Congress; Congressional; Senate; House of Representatives; House; Senate Congressman; Representative; member of the House Legislature; the State Legislature; Assembly; Senate assemblyman/woman--capitalize only when part of a name committee and department - capitalize only when part of a name.
6. League capitalization: do not capitalize unless noted
  - annual meeting
  - board – local board, state board, national board, board of directors bulletin, except when part of a title

- bylaws
  - chairperson – to avoid sexist terminology and awkward compound
  - words, the state League prefers the title “director” or “chair”
  - consensus
  - convention; state convention; national convention
  - council; state council; national council
  - Election Day
  - League – always capitalize; local League of Women Voters
  - portfolio titles are not capitalized: education, membership
  - publication: always underline or italicize the title
7. If an article is within a publication, put the title of the article in quotation marks, preceding the publication's name. Publisher and date follow name of publication:  
 "The League Supports Domestic Violence Reform Bill," Legislative Newsletter, LWVNYS, May 1994.

### Abbreviations

First mention of organizations, firms, agencies, groups, etc., should be spelled out and the abbreviation bracketed after the spelled-out name (e.g., Department of Energy [DOE]). Thereafter the abbreviation may be used by itself.

Lower case abbreviations usually take periods. The rule of thumb is if letters without periods spell words, periods are needed (e.g., c.o.d., f.o.b.).

### Citation of Sources

If a book, pamphlet, or article stand alone, underline (e.g., Foreign Policy Leaders Guide). If an article is within a publication, put the title of the article in quotes and underline the publication (e.g., "Teeth for HUD," New Jersey VOTER, October 1979).

### **LEAGUE ABBREVIATIONS**

<u>National</u>			<u>State &amp; Local</u>	
LWVUS	League of Women Voters of the United States		LWVNYS	League of Women Voters of New York State
LWVEF	League of Women Voters Education Fund		LWVNYSEF	League of Women Voters of New York State Education Foundation
OEF	Overseas Education Fund		SBR	State Board Report
AA	Action Alert		PR	public relations
MAL	member-at-large		ILO	Inter-League organization
PMP	per member payment		LL	local League

## **II. The League and the Legislative Process**

### **HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN NEW YORK STATE**

[This material is adopted from a New York State Senate Publication of the same name located at [www.senate.state.ny.us/sws/aboutsenate/how\\_idea\\_becomes\\_law.html](http://www.senate.state.ny.us/sws/aboutsenate/how_idea_becomes_law.html)]

*(Note: The possibility for League participation in this process has been highlighted.)*

#### **Discussion of Ideas**

A bill first begins as a discussion of ideas within the Executive or Legislative branch. As an advocate, it is most beneficial to form relationships with those who formulate policy and to offer to assist them, either by provision of materials in support of a particular policy or by proposing bill language to achieve a particular goal.

#### **Bill Drafting**

Once an idea for a new law has been settled on, it must be put into written (bill) form before it can be considered by the legislature. The actual drafting of legislation requires a specialized type of legal training and is usually done by the staff of the Legislative Bill Drafting Commission.

Sometimes, however, an interest group may have its own attorney draft a bills as well as lawyers working in various state agencies and the executive branch often submit their ideas for legislation in bill form. Often bills go through many drafts before being introduced with input from interested parties along the way. **The League often works with sympathetic Assemblypersons and Senators to provide model bill language and to critique drafts.**

#### **Introduction**

No law may be enacted in New York State unless it has been adopted by the Legislature in bill form. And to be adopted, it must first be introduced. With a single exception, bills can be introduced only by legislators or by standing committees of the Senate and Assembly. That exception is the Executive Budget, which is submitted directly by the Governor.

#### **Committee Action**

After introduction, a bill is referred to committee by the Temporary President of the Senate or

the Speaker of the Assembly. A committee agenda is issued each week listing the bills and issues each committee will handle the following week. Committees often hold public hearings on bills. **The League will offer public testimony and circulate memos in support of or opposition to bills. Such memos are normally circulated electronically to all members of the Committee and to the leadership of the house considering the bill. The League may also circulate action alerts using CATT to constituents of committee members, advising them to contact their committee member legislators in support of or in opposition to the bill. CATT stands for Citizen Action Toolkit which is found on the State league website. It is the electronic mechanism the League uses to urge action on a legislative bill.**

After consideration, the committee may report the bill to the floor for consideration, it may amend the bill, or it may reject it.

### **The Calendar**

The Daily Calendar is the agenda for Assembly or Senate sessions and contains those measures which have come through the committee process. Bills take their place in order as they are reported from committee, and at this point are referred by their Calendar Number. **At this point, the League will often circulate memos in support or opposition to the entire body and send out an action alert through CATT advising all League members to contact their legislators. The League will continue to lobby, as is appropriate, as the bill makes its way through both chambers.**

Each bill has to be on the legislators' desks for three days before it can be voted on, unless the Governor authorizes and the chamber accepts a Message of Necessity for a certain bill. When bills reach the Order of Third Reading, they become ready for a final vote and are subject to debate, discussion or explanation. If the sponsor of a bill realizes at this point that his bill may not have enough support for passage, or has a defect which may require an amendment, (s) he may ask that it be laid aside, returned to committee for further study, or "starred" (placed in an inactive file). It should be noted that "starring" a bill isn't done anymore primarily because of the work of the good government groups. However, it is still in the Senate rules. Presently only the Majority Leader can "star" a bill or remove a "star".

### **Floor Amendments**

Once a bill has been introduced reported out by a committee and is on the calendar for consideration by the full chamber, it can still be amended. The sponsor of the bill, for example, can submit the changes to the Bill Drafting Commission; the bill, now in its amended form, retains its original number, but amended versions are denoted by a letter suffix A, B, C, D and so on for each time the bill is altered.

However, beyond this, any legislator may amend a given bill by offering amendments to it on the floor, even if he or she is not one of the bill's sponsors.

This method allows all members access to a bill's language, opening it to the suggestions and opinions of members who may like the essential ideas of the bill, but disagree with the sponsor on one or more of the legislation's details. Moreover, since the amendments are offered in open session, all members can ask questions and discuss the merits of the proposed amendments.

### **Passing a Bill**

After explanation, discussion or debate, a vote is taken. If a majority of the legislators approves, the bill is sent to the other chamber for action.

The bill goes through essentially the same process in the other chamber. Many bills are passed in one chamber and die in committee when forwarded to the other chamber.

If a bill is approved in both the Assembly and Senate without amendment, it goes on to the Governor. However, if it is changed, it is returned to the original chamber for concurrence in the amendments.

### **Conference Committees**

Sometimes the Senate and Assembly pass similar bills, but cannot easily reconcile the differences between them in a reasonable time frame. In such cases, a procedural device called a conference committee can be used to iron out the differences.

The Senate Majority Leader and Assembly Speaker each appoint five members from their respective houses to serve on this committee. After agreement is reached, a bill is printed and processed like any other bill.

### **The Governor**

While the Legislature is in session, the Governor has 10 days (not counting Sundays) to sign or veto bills passed by both houses. Signed bills become law; vetoed bills do not. However, the Governor's failure to sign or veto a bill within the 10-day period means that it becomes law automatically. Vetoed bills are returned to the house that first passed them, together with a statement of the reason for their disapproval. A vetoed bill can become law if two-thirds of the members of each house vote to override the Governor's veto.

If a bill is sent to the Governor when the Legislature is out of session, the rules are a bit different. At such times, the Governor has 30 days in which to make a decision, and failure to act ("pocket veto") has the same effect as a veto. **The League may again wish to lobby at this level by urging the Governor to take a particular action with respect to the bill.**

## **THE BUDGET PROCESS**

[This is a replication of a Division of Budget publication of the same title, appearing at [www.budget.state.ny.us/citizen/process/process.html](http://www.budget.state.ny.us/citizen/process/process.html).]

New York State's budget process uses an executive budget model, enshrined into Article VII of the State Constitution. Under this system, the Executive (Governor, with input from the administrative agencies) is responsible for developing and preparing a comprehensive, balanced budget proposal, which the Legislature modifies and enacts into law. To fulfill this obligation, all agencies of State government develop revenue requests for the next fiscal year. The Governor, through his/her Division of Budget, melds these competing requests for funds into a "complete" plan of proposed expenditures and the revenues available to support them (a "balanced budget"), and submits the budget to the Legislature, along with the appropriation bills and other legislation required to carry out budgetary recommendations.

The State's fiscal year begins April 1 and ends on March 31. Because New York has no automatically operative method with which to continue State operations if a timely budget is not enacted, there is ongoing pressure to enact a budget by the start of the fiscal year.

### **Agency Budget Preparation (June–September/October)**

Preparation of budget requests varies among agencies reflecting their size, complexity and internal practice. Typically, budget development begins at the program or sub-departmental level, with staff preparing individual program requests. The head of the agency or its top fiscal officer may hold internal hearings at which program managers outline their budgetary needs.

Although agencies begin to analyze their budget needs as early as May or June, the formal budget cycle begins when the Budget Director issues a policy memorandum - the "call letter" - to agency heads. The call letter outlines, in general terms, the Governor's priorities for the coming year, alerts the agency heads to expected fiscal constraints and informs agencies of the schedule for submitting requests to the Division of the Budget. The call letter signals the official start of the budget process.

By early-mid fall, a final program package is assembled by each agency, which is guided by the instructions set forth by the Division of the Budget, reviewed for consistency with the call letter, and approved by the agency head.

### **Division of the Budget Review (September/October–December)**

In accordance with the schedule outlined in the call letter, agencies typically submit their budget requests to the Division of the Budget in early-mid fall, with copies provided to the legislative fiscal committees. Examination units within the Division then analyze the requests of the agencies for which they have responsibility. Examiners may seek additional information from the agencies and may hold informal hearings or meetings with agency management to clarify agency requests and seek a more precise definition of agency priorities. By the end of October,

examination units have also usually determined funding requirements to continue agency programs at current levels in the new year.

In November, the Budget Director conducts constitutionally authorized “formal” budget hearings, giving agency heads an opportunity to present and discuss their budget requests and giving the staff of the Division of the Budget and the Governor’s office an opportunity to raise critical questions on program, policy and priorities. As provided in the Constitution, representatives of the Legislature also participate in the hearings.

Under reform legislation passed in January 2007, a “quick start” budget process was instituted to help provide an earlier understanding of the state’s available funding resources. By November 5, the Division of the Budget, the Assembly, the Senate, and the comptroller release detailed forecasts of revenues and expenditures. After a public meeting with the respective staff members of these parties, DOB, the Senate, and the Assembly release a consensus forecast of the state’s financial position by November 15.

Through late November, the Division’s examiners transform agency requests into preliminary budget and personnel recommendations which are reviewed in detail with the Director. They also prepare the appropriation bills and any other legislation required to carry out these recommendations. Concurrently, the Division of the Budget’s fiscal planning staff is reassessing economic projections, investigating possible changes in the revenue structure, analyzing trends in federal funding, and preparing the Financial Plan that describes and forecasts the State’s fiscal condition. The Financial Plan is prepared both on a cash basis and according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

By early December, the Division of the Budget will normally have completed its preliminary recommendations on both revenues and expenditures, and presented them to the Governor and the Governor’s staff. Budget staff then prepares the tables and the narrative (the “budget story”) that accompany each agency budget, and the descriptions and forecasts of individual revenue sources.

### **The Governor's Decisions (November – January)**

The Governor's staff, who is also preparing the annual "State of the State" message to the Legislature, works with the Budget Division throughout the development of the budget. The Governor is kept up-to-date on changing economic and revenue forecasts and confirms that executive program priorities are accurately reflected in the budget. Based on the preliminary recommendations and the most current reading of the economic and fiscal environment, the final Executive Budget recommendations are formulated in a series of meetings between Division of the Budget staff and the Governor. These sessions focus on major fiscal and policy issues and may lead to significant revisions in agency budgets.

### **Legislative Action (January–March)**

Typically by mid-January – or, following a gubernatorial election year, by February 1 – the Governor submits his Executive Budget to the Legislature, along with the related appropriation, revenue, and budget bills. The State's five-year Financial Plan, Five-Year Capital Program and

Financing Plan, and financial information supporting the Executive Budget are also submitted with the Executive Budget.

The Legislature, primarily through its fiscal committees – Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means – analyzes the Governor's spending proposals and revenue estimates, holds public hearings on major programs, and seeks further information from the Division of the Budget and other State agencies. Following that review, the Legislature acts on the appropriation bills submitted with the Executive Budget.

Article VII of the State Constitution limits the extent to which the budget may be modified by the legislature without gubernatorial consent. With respect to appropriations, it may strike, or delete, appropriations, reduce an appropriation amount, or add spending as a new line in order to increase the amount of a scheduled appropriation or add a new appropriation. The Governor has the right to veto added funds. The gubernatorial veto can be overridden by 2/3 vote of each chamber.

Under budget reform legislation passed in 2007, the Legislature is required to use a conference committee process between the two houses to organize its deliberations, set priorities, and reach agreement on a Budget. In addition, the State Finance Law requires that the Executive and Legislature convene a consensus economic and revenue forecasting conference and issue a consensus report on tax, lottery and miscellaneous receipts on or before March 1. If the parties fail to reach consensus, the Comptroller is required to issue a binding revenue forecast by March 5.

Based on their separate and joint deliberations, the two houses reach agreement on spending and revenue recommendations, which are reflected in amended versions of the Governor's proposed appropriation bills and related legislation, and approved by both houses. These amended bills are available from the Senate and Assembly Document Rooms located in the Capitol and the Legislative Office Building, and on the Internet.

The appropriation bills, except for those items which were added by the Legislature and the appropriations for the Legislature and Judiciary, become law without further action by the Governor. The Governor must approve or disapprove all or parts of the appropriation bills covering the Legislature and Judiciary, and may use the line item veto to disapprove items added by the Legislature while approving the remainder of the bill. As provided in the Constitution, the Legislature may override the Governor's veto by a vote of two-thirds of the members of each house. The appropriation bills legally authorize the expenditure of funds during the new fiscal year.

Prior to passage of the appropriation bills, the Legislature must issue a summary of the proposed changes to the budget to its members. The Division of the Budget is also required to prepare a report that summarizes the impact of the Legislature's actions on the State's multi-year Financial Plan. Once the Governor completes his review of the Legislature's actions, the Division then issues a comprehensive Enacted Budget Report that contains the State's official Financial Plan projections for the current and successive fiscal years. The Legislature must also issue a report describing appropriation changes and the effect of the Enacted Budget on State agency employment levels.

## **THE RULE MAKING PROCESS**

Many bills call for administrative agencies to promulgate administrative regulations (rules) to implement the legislation. These rules address matters not covered in the legislation and can have a major effect on its efficacy. Once enacted, the regulations have the effect of law. Therefore, as part of our advocacy process, it behooves us to follow both proposed rules and amendments to rules.

Administrative agencies are supposed to consult with the public before publicizing rules. **To the extent that an Off Board Specialist can foster an ongoing relationship with the administrative agency responsible for regulations, she/he may be invited to provide input at this early stage.**

As a general rule, an agency must publish notice of a proposed rule at least 45 days before adoption. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is published weekly in the *New York State Register* in the Action Pending Index. The Register is available on-line at [www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm). Proposed rules of less than 2000 words are published in full. Those that are not published in full are summarized and may be available on the agency's website or as specified in the notice in the Register. Occasionally rules are adopted on an emergency basis, in which case they become effective immediately, but are still subject to a comment period and the possibility of amendment as the result of comment.

During the comment period of at least 45 days, **any interested party may offer a comment** on the regulation. Agencies may also hold public hearings on the proposed regulations. This provides an opportunity for rule makers to hear comment, as well as to ask questions of those commenting.

***If the proposed rule is substantially changed as the result of public comment, the agency must file a notice of revised rule making, with an additional period for comment. This also entails an additional, although abbreviated, comment period.***

## **OPEN MEETINGS LAW AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW**

New York State has both an Open Meetings Law and a Freedom of Information Law, designed to assure that most governmental meetings are open to the public and that most governmental records are available to the public.

The Committee on Open Government within the New York Department of State is charged with oversight responsibilities for the State's sunshine laws. Information about these laws is contained in the Committee on Open Government publication, *Your Right to Know – New York State's Open Government Laws*. The laws themselves, implementing regulations, and decisions under them, along with additional explanatory information, are contained at the Committee's website, [www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/coogwww.html](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/coog/coogwww.html).

If you are unable to obtain entry to meetings or access to documents that you believe should be open under one of these laws, call a meeting of the State Issues Committee to decide what League action is appropriate.

## **MANEUVERING AROUND THE CAPITOL**

### **How to Find the Information You Need**

*(Updated July 2008)*

#### **LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION**

##### **Public Information Office**

Bill Status: 1-800-342-9860, open 9 a.m.-5 p.m., weekdays, all year; offers basic bill information and will mail copies of bills on request.

Bills, laws, and their histories are available on-line at <http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menuf.cgi>.

##### **Assembly**

The Assembly's homepage is <http://assembly.state.ny.us/>. From there you can obtain information about Assembly members, bills and legislation, public hearing calendars, legislative reports, committee schedules, and information about commissions and task forces. The list of Assembly Committee schedules and the bills to be considered in each meeting are listed as a sidebar to the bills and legislation section.

The Public Information Office in Room 202, Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY 12248, (518) 455-4218 is the place to go for copies of bills and their histories, voting records on the bills acted upon in the Assembly, attendance records of individual Assembly members, debate transcripts, Assembly and committee agendas, memoranda relating to specific legislative proposals, annual reports of Assembly committees, salary records of Assembly employees, status of particular bills, and other information relating to the activities of the Assembly. It is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon.-Fri. You can review this information in the Public Information Office or obtain copies for 25¢ a page.

##### **Senate**

The Senate homepage is [www.senate.state.ny.us/](http://www.senate.state.ny.us/). You may obtain the same information for the Senate that is available for the Assembly.

##### **Committee Schedules**

Committee agendas and calendars for each chamber are reviewed by the vice president/ Issues & Advocacy and Legislative Director by going to the Senate and Assembly websites to learn whether LWVNYS bills are to be discussed. Agendas are usually issued weekly, on Friday or Monday. Off Board Specialists can access this material directly by using the same websites. Agendas are available at the Public Information Office, Room 202, Legislative Office Building (LOB) or Calendars are issued for each day of the session, usually the day before the session. **Lobbyists are expected to attend committee meetings and report to the legislative director and the Off-Board Specialist.**

### **Budget Bills**

Budgetary material is available on-line once the Governor sends the Executive Budget to the Legislature, either through the Governor's website, the Division of Budget website, or the

Assembly and Senate websites. A printed version is also available in the Capitol. **For your area of expertise**, you should get the appropriations bill, the Article VII (program) bill, the policy overview, the agency presentation, the State's five-year financial plan, and five-year capital program and financing plan.

### **Budget Hearings**

Once the budget is available, a list of hearings will be published. **If you wish to present testimony**, get your name on the list by calling the number of the person in charge of the hearing.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Administrative Regulations**

Existing administrative regulations are available on-line at [www.dos.state.ny.us/infor/nycrr.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/infor/nycrr.htm). This is the on-line version of New York Codes, Rules, and Regulations (NYCRR), the compendium of administrative regulations, organized by agency.

### **Proposed Regulations**

The New York State Administrative Register is published weekly and is available on-line at [www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm](http://www.dos.state.ny.us/info/register.htm). Click on the year you wish to view, and click on the date of the Register you wish to view. Proposed regulations are listed in the Action Pending Index.

### **Administrative Hearings**

The public is invited to submit written testimony in support of or opposition to proposed regulations. In addition, public hearings may be held around the state, at which members of the public are invited to testify.

## **STATE ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES**

- *Agriculture and Markets*  
Serves agricultural producers and the consuming public. Promotes agriculture through various industry and export development programs; enforces food safety laws.
- *Audit and Control*  
Maintains the State's accounts; pays the State's payrolls and bills; invests State funds; audits State agencies and local governments; and administers the State employee retirement system.
- *Banking*  
Primary regulator for State-licensed and State-chartered financial entities operating in New York, including: domestic banks, foreign agencies, branch and representative offices, savings institutions and trust companies, mortgage bankers and brokers, check cashers and money transmitters. Ensures the safe and sound conduct of these businesses maintains public confidence in the banking system and protects the public interest as well as the interests of depositors, creditors and shareholders.
- *Civil Service*  
The central personnel agency for the Executive branch of State government. Provides the State of New York with a trained workforce; administers health, dental and insurance programs covering State employees and retirees as well as some local government employees; and provides technical services to the State's 102 municipal service agencies, covering approximately 392,000 local government employees.
- *Correctional Services*  
Operates facilities for the custody and rehabilitation of inmates.
- *Economic Development*  
Creates jobs and encourages economic prosperity by providing technical and financial assistance to businesses.
- *Education*  
Supervises all educational institutions in the State, operates certain educational and cultural institutions, certifies teachers and certifies/licenses 44 other professions.
- *Environmental Conservation*  
Administers programs designed to protect and improve the State's natural resources.
- *Executive*  
There are numerous agencies within the Executive Department to accommodate governmental functions, including Budget and divisions and offices that do not logically fit into the framework of the other departments, such as the Division of Veterans' Affairs (which advises veterans on services, benefits and entitlements, and administers payments of bonuses and annuities to blind veterans) and the Office of General Services (which provides centralized data processing, construction, maintenance and design services as well as printing, transportation and communication systems).

- *Family Assistance*  
Promotes greater self-sufficiency by providing support services for needy families and adults that lead to self-reliance.
- *Health*  
Protects and promotes the health of New Yorkers through enforcement of public health and related laws, and assurance of quality health care delivery.
- *Insurance*  
Supervises and regulates all insurance business in New York State. Issues licenses to agents, brokers and consultants; conducts examinations of insurers; reviews complaints from policyholders; and approves corporate formations, mergers and consolidations.
- *Labor*  
Helps New York work by preparing individuals for jobs; administering unemployment insurance, disability benefits and workers' compensation; and ensuring workplace safety.
- *Law*  
Protects the rights of New Yorkers; represents the State in legal matters; and prosecutes violations of State law.
- *Mental Hygiene*  
Provides services for individuals suffering from mental illness, developmental disabilities and/or substance abuse.
- *Motor Vehicles*  
Registers vehicles, licenses drivers and promotes highway safety.
- *Public Service*  
Ensures that all New Yorkers have access to reliable and low-cost utility services by promoting competition and reliability in utility services.
- *State*  
Known as the keeper of records, the Department of State issues business licenses, enforces building codes, provides technical assistance to local governments and administers fire prevention and control services.
- *Taxation and Finance*  
Collects taxes and administers the State's tax laws.
- *Transportation*  
Coordinates and assists in the development and operation of highway, railroad, mass transit, port, waterway and aviation facilities.