

# Using LWV Positions for Local Advocacy

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LWVMI STATE CONVENTION – CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

MAY 18, 2019 – BEST PRACTICES WORKSHOP – 3:45 – 5:15 P.M.

# What is Advocacy?

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League advocacy actions include, but are not limited to, providing information to league members and to the public, building public opinion, and supporting or opposing legislation.

Methods to do this can include lobbying, testifying at public hearings, using public forums and the media, panel discussions, league publications, and communication with public officials.

Adopted by the LWVMI Board of Directors, December 2017

# Building Lively, Livable Communities via Advocacy is an A.R.T. Form

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**Affection** – For the governmental process, creating or enhancing assets in the community, defining the public problem, learning about the policy solutions, using tools of analysis, and hosting policy conversations

**Relationships** – Building bridges to and between elected & appointed officials, working as a teacher & a learner, designing places where ‘freedom can sit down’ and neighbors (who are often strangers) can have a conversation across barriers of political party, race, class, gender, culture, language, ways of knowing, & ways of being

**Tenacity** – Commitment to the ‘long game’, overcoming set-backs, changing minds with stories and statistics, courage to convene difficult conversations

# Using national and state positions for local advocacy

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Our state policy positions are available at

[www.lwvmi.org](http://www.lwvmi.org) Select “Positions” from the left menu

Our national policy positions are available at

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org) and are published as “Impact on Issues” which is available at amazon.com

# We have 16 state LWVMI policy positions

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**Government (4)** – Redistricting for the State Legislature and U.S. House of Representatives; Election Laws, Intergovernmental Relations within Michigan Government; and Finance.

**Natural Resources (5)** – Great Lakes Ecosystem; Land Use; Pesticides; Solid Waste Management; Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations

**Social Policy (7)** – Children & Youth; Public Education (PreK-12) in Michigan; Health Care; Social Services System; Structure & Funding of Michigan's Public Libraries; Agricultural Migrant/Seasonal Workers; Prisons in Michigan

We have 60 national LWVUS policy positions – Representative Government

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**Representative Government (20)** – Preventing Election Day Barriers; Key Structures of Democracy; Voting Rights; Citizens' Right to Vote; DC Self-Government & Full Voting; Representation; The Election Process, Apportionment; Redistricting; Money in Politics; Selection of President; Citizen Rights; Right to Know/Citizen Participation; Individual Liberties; Constitutional Amendment Proposals; Constitutional Conventions; Public Policy on Reproductive Choices; Congress; The Presidency; and Privatization

# LWVUS National Positions

## International Relations

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**International Relations (8)** – United Nations; Trade; U.S. Relations with Developing Countries; Europe; Africa; The Americas; Arms Control; Military Policy and Defense Spending

# LWVUS National Positions

## Natural Resources

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**Natural Resources (8)** – Resource Management; Environmental Protection and Pollution Control; Air Quality; Water Resources; Solid Waste; Nuclear Waste; Public Participation; and Agriculture Policies



# LWVUS National Positions

## Social Policy

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**Social Policy (24)** – Equality of Opportunity; Education; Employment; Nondiscrimination & Affirmative Action; Pay Equity; Fair Housing; Equal Rights; Federal Role in Public Education; Fiscal Policy; Health Care; Immigration; Meeting Basic Human Needs (Income Assistance, Support Services, Housing Supply, Transportation); Child Care; Early Intervention for Children at Risk; Violence Prevention; Gun Control; Urban Policy; Death Penalty; Sentencing Policy; and Human Trafficking

# Local LWV policy positions

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As of 2019, 12 Local Leagues have utilized the study and consensus process to develop local policy positions.

The earliest – 1959 – when the Berrien-Cass League studied sanitation and water conservation

In 1966 the Northwest Wayne County League developed a position concerning County Home Rule

In all, (in 2019) there are 74 local League positions on the websites of Ann Arbor (2), Copper Country (8), Dearborn-Dearborn Heights (9), Flint (7), Grand Traverse Area (4), Grosse Pointe (6), Holland (2), Leelanau (1) Midland (11), Kalamazoo (10), Lansing (5), and Northwest Wayne County (9)

# What comes next?

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Study

Consensus

Position

**ACTION - The A.R.T. of ADVOCACY to Change Minds, Hearts, & Communities**

# Affection looks like this...

Skills needed: vision, writing, research, analysis, photography

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- Enhancing or creating anew an asset in your community
- Defining a public problem/asset with precision
- Locating and describing the parameters of that problem
- Describing possible solutions to ameliorate the problem
- Identifying the “best” solution to the problem (the “Ask”)
- Describing the resources needed – who will pay and how
- Making a record of the historical context
- Identifying the LWV position that “grounds” your work
- Keeping a record of actions taken

# Relationships look like this...

Skills needed: writing, speaking, listening, DEI skills

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- Building a local LWV Advocacy Team(s) or a study group(s)
- Meeting(s) with appointed and elected officials (formal & informal)
- Recognizing & respecting officials' workload/protocols
- Providing materials so officials can learn
- Identifying & recruiting supportive partners
- Identifying & involving people with deeper firsthand knowledge and experience
- Creating public opportunities to learn (hearings, study committees, speakers' bureau, conferences, video, podcasts)

# Tenacity looks like this...

Skills needed: patience, humor, ability to 'walk toward the noise'

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Making a strategic timeline for actions to be taken

Learning more about the decision-makers

Learning more about the public problem & solution

Enhancing relationships with all actors

Splitting the "solution" into actionable phases

Revising the timeline & altering expectations

Celebrating along the journey

Utilizing LWV State & National Positions for Local Advocacy –  
Two Recent Case Studies (contact Leelanau League for details)

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Sue Miller – Chair of the Leelanau League’s Early Childhood  
Needs and Services Committee on **ADVOCACY**

Christi Bardenhagen – Co-chair of the Leelanau League’s  
Farm Labor and Immigration Task Force on **LOCAL STUDY**