



# VOTER

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## ***Convening Convention in Wilsonville***

To hold conventions – that’s the League way. We convene as a whole statewide group once a year. We just held Convention 2017 on May 5-7 in Wilsonville. The state League board heartily thanks LWV of Clackamas County for hosting and providing a great program.

One convention highlight was Amy Hjerstedt. She lives in Arlington, VA, now, and for being so young she has a tremendous amount of League experience. She is on the LWVUS board of directors for 2016-2018, and at one time she was a member of the Portland League. See her bio here: <http://lwv.org/content/amy-hjerstedt-0>. After hearing her speak at the Convention luncheon on Saturday, and again in the afternoon about her experience with Membership and Leadership Development (MLD), many agreed we would like to clone her! Amy is a dynamic young woman with young children and still finds time to generate tremendous motivating energy around her. We can all take a lesson in her innovative ways, which is a huge subject in itself. We thank Kathleen Hersh of LWV Portland for bringing Amy to convention.

Highlights include time with friends from around the state who we do not often see, and Rick Shenkman’s keynote address on Saturday evening. Mr. Shenkman has a long history of writing as a historian, producer, journalist and college lecturer. For several years, he was the managing editor of KIRO-TV News, the CBS affiliate in Seattle, Washington. He also founded <http://historynewsnetwork.org>. His bio is online at <http://www.rickshenkman.com/bio>. Leaguers should read his books, as they are pertinent to what the League is about. One book is “Political Animal: How our stone-age brain gets in the way of smart politics,” and another spoken about at Convention is “Just How Stupid Are We? Facing the truth about the American voter.” Thank you, Libby Medley of LWV Clackamas, for finding Mr. Shenkman.

Financing the convention: Sally McKain, Events Chair, and Libby Medley, LWV Clackamas Convention Chair, and the Convention Committee all did a fine job of finding the most economic arrangements that would also satisfy our needs. Sixty in total attended. We broke about even at approx. \$8,500 in expenses (convention meeting rooms and meals) and in revenue (registrations, meals, sales, and donations). To run such an event conserving resources is one of the state League’s goals and one of their fiduciary duties.

A good convention “takes a village.” Thanks go out to all who participated from the LWVOR and LWV Clackamas boards of directors, to delegates, observers, guests, supporters, speakers, ushers, and hotel workers. The Convention Committee is open to entertaining new suggestions and comments so we can improve the next time. We are now looking ahead to Council 2018 and Convention 2019.

Let us know your thoughts about conventions and councils, and if you’d like to help.

Robin Wisdom, LWVOR Convention Committee,  
Co-Chair, Kathleen Hersh,  
Co-Chair, Chris Vogel, Co-Chair

## Civil Discourse: Putting our New LWVOR Position into Practice

*Marge Easley, LWV Clackamas County*

Given the divisive and rancorous nature of politics today, “civil discourse” was the timely topic chosen as the recommended program item for 2017-18 and one of the focal points for this year’s LWVOR Convention. Delegates voted to accept by concurrence the Civil Discourse position of LWV San Luis Obispo:

*“Promote civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and citizens for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.”*

Of course, we know that the concept of civil discourse is already in the DNA of League members, but it is hoped that having a position will serve to spur LWVOR and local Leagues to highlight the topic this coming year in a variety of ways, including community forums, outreach to government leaders, media messaging, and youth activities. Be creative, and think of ways that your League can use civil discourse strategies to bridge political divides and strengthen community bonds.

Please take a look at the new [Civil Discourse](http://lwvor.org/home/take-action/lwv-oregon-positions/civil-discourse/) page of the LWVOR website (<http://lwvor.org/home/take-action/lwv-oregon-positions/civil-discourse/>) where you can find numerous links to resource materials, as well as the PowerPoint slides from the convention workshop, “Civil Discourse: From Confrontation to Dialogue.” Stay tuned for more civil discourse information and program ideas following the LWVOR Board Retreat.

-AND SO IT BEGINS...



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**VOTER** Editor: Karan Kuntz

### LWVOR Mission

The League of Women Voters® of Oregon is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide. The state League’s purposes are to influence public policy through education and advocacy and to provide support for League members and the League organization.

## **Action Committee Still Hard at Work**

*Alice Bartelt, Action Coordinator*

Even though the Legislature will be adjourning in a little over a month from now, there is still plenty of work for our Action Committee members to do. High on the list is watching and weighing in on agency budgets. As part of that, the need for new revenue looms large.

Behind the scenes, negotiations among legislators are happening around a transportation package and tax reform. It has been disappointing that businesses, who promised to help with tax reform as the public defeated Measure 97, have dug in their heels and refused to consider any kind of reform that includes a business activities tax. As a consequence, there is still a gap between revenue that is needed and revenue that is currently coming into the state. In addition, because of our quirky kicker law, money could go back to tax payers, even when the state needs all of the revenue that it can get.

Thanks to the many members of the Action Committee, LWVOR has been able to provide testimony and mobilize members on many bills that are important to our members. Without the large committee that covers many areas, our voice would not be effective.

## **New Program Options for LWVOR**

*Alice Bartelt, Bylaws Committee Chair*

During the Convention in Wilsonville, the delegates voted to give LWVOR the option of adopting position statements from other Leagues. This gives leeway to adopt a position without having to do a study ourselves:

*Article XI, Sec. 3. **Convention Action.** The convention shall select those governmental issues for concerted study and action, using the following procedure:*

- a. Local Leagues shall submit program recommendations to the LWVOR Board of Directors for consideration at least two months prior to the convention.*
- b. The LWVOR Board of Directors shall consider the recommendations and shall formulate a proposed Program that shall be submitted to the local League Boards at least four weeks prior to the convention.*
- c. Any League that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position by concurrence with a position statement of another League or Leagues shall submit the recommendation to the state board as specified in Section 3a of this Article. Any League, or the state board, that plans to propose the adoption or amendment of a state League position by*

*concurrence with a position statement of another League or Leagues on the floor of convention shall send the proposed position statement, background information, including pros and cons on the issue and an explanation of the rationale for using this form of member agreement, to all Leagues at least four weeks before convention. Adoption of a concurrence requires a 2/3 vote.*

*d. Any recommendation for the Program submitted to the LWVOR Board of Directors at least two months prior to the convention, but not proposed by the LWVOR Board, may be adopted by the convention, provided consideration is ordered by a majority vote and the vote on adoption comes on a following day. Adoption of Program shall adhere to convention rules.*

Because this bylaw was adopted, the League was able to adopt a concurrence with a position from LWV San Luis Obispo involving civil discourse. The new position is: **“Promote civil discourse through action and education for all government bodies, staff, and citizens for the purpose of improved public policy decisions and processes. Civil discourse means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.”**

(Continued page 4.)

## **Program Options**

**(Continued from page 3)**

The project would initially be headed by a small committee of 4 to 6 League members who, over a two-month period, will adapt and collate educational/advocacy materials on civil discourse already available from LWV of San Luis Obispo, LWV of Washington State, LWV of North County San Diego, and many other statewide and national organizations. This material will consist of resource materials as well as optional implementation ideas for LWVOR and local Leagues, including:

- Review of Oregon's Open Meetings Law and the rights/responsibilities of citizens when interacting with government.
- Op-ed articles and social media messages on the importance of civil discourse.
- Presentation materials to explain guidelines for civility in government with respectful dialogue strategies. Provision of sample brochures, civil discourse resolutions, meeting rules, and/or standards of conduct for legislators, county commissioners, mayors, city councilors, and other government officials.
- Community forums on civil discourse and respectful communication, possibly in partnership with other groups/organizations.
- Youth involvement: Provide civil discourse strategies in the Mock Election curriculum, school presentations in conjunction with anti-bullying efforts.

The Civil Discourse Committee will work to provide implementation materials to the LWVOR Board and local Leagues in time for Civil Discourse to be included in the 2017-18 Program. Also, the Committee will likely expand as time goes on to include more representatives from interested local Leagues. The Committee will provide ongoing support and materials to Leagues as needed. A report on the project's progress would be presented at the 2018 Council and 2019 Convention.

If your league is interested in working on this, please contact President Norman Turrill or Marge Easley of the Clackamas County League.

## **The Rules for Lobbying as a 501(c)(3) Organization**

At the LWVOR Convention, there were many questions about what exactly is lobbying. This article will hopefully answer all those questions.

The Internal Revenue Service indicates that a 501(c)(3) organization may lobby, but such lobbying may not be a substantial part of its activities. Lobbying is attempting to influence legislation. Legislation includes action by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body with respect to specific acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items. It also includes trying to influence the public in relation to referenda, initiatives, constitutional amendments, or similar procedures. It does not include actions by executive, judicial or administrative bodies.

An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose to proposing, supporting or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

The IRS defines two categories of [lobbying](#):

**Direct lobbying** refers to attempts to influence a legislative body through communication with a member or employee of a legislative body, or with any government official who participates in formulating legislation. In direct lobbying, an organization works to directly influence the parties making the law. Therefore, direct lobbying includes attempting to influence voters about ballot measures.

(Continued page 5.)

## **501(c)(3) Rules (Continued from page 4)**

**Grassroots lobbying** refers to attempts to influence legislation by attempting to affect the opinion of the public with respect to the legislation and encouraging the audience to take action with respect to the legislation. In grassroots lobbying, an organization works one step removed from the parties making the law. It works to influence members of the public – who will then take action to influence the parties making the law.

In both cases, the communications must refer to and reflect a view on the legislation.

Organizations may elect the expenditure test to measure lobbying activity. In an organization that has a budget under \$500,000, before being considered a substantial part of its activities, the expenditure in money for direct lobbying must not exceed 20% of the expenditures by the organization. The amount of expenditures permitted for grassroots lobbying is limited to only 5% of the organization's total expenditures. If an organization wants to use the expenditure test, which LWVOR recommends, the group must file Form 5768 with the IRS.

Activities that are educational in nature do not count toward lobbying. So, holding forums or debates, or producing voters' guides do not count as lobbying.

### **Test Yourself: Do These League Activities Qualify as Lobbying?**

<b>League Activity</b>	<b>Lobbying?</b>	<b>Direct or Grassroots?</b>
(1) Testify on behalf of LWV at public meeting to ask elected officials to vote yes or no on proposed law or ordinance (including travel costs)	Yes	Direct
(2) Conduct legislative interviews with state representatives or senators	No	
(3) Email an action alert asking recipients to contact their representatives to support or oppose a bill	Yes	Grassroots
(4) Testify on behalf of LWV at public meeting in favor of helping the homeless	No	
(5) File legal brief in land use case	No	
(6) Purchase pro or con statement related to ballot measure in Voters' Pamphlet	Yes	Direct
(7) Host candidate forum	No	
(8) Host Speakers' Bureau presentation	No	
(9) Publish LWV Voters' Guide	No	

Comments:

(1) Asking people who make the law (elected legislators) to vote a certain way on specific legislation.

(2) Gathering information from legislators, not attempting to influence them on specific legislation.

(3) Asking the public to ask their representatives to vote a certain way on specific legislation.

(4) No specific legislation is being addressed.

(5) Judicial, not legislative, body.

(6) Asking people who make the law (voters) to vote a certain way on specific legislation.

(7) – (9) Educational activity that does not try to influence voters.

## ***Remarks of the Incoming President at the LWVOR Convention***

Norman Turrill, [n.turrill@lwvor.org](mailto:n.turrill@lwvor.org)

After our long exhausting weekend, I don't want to talk much more to you, and you probably don't want to hear much more from me! But I would like to present a few thoughts. We have heard quite a bit from Amy Hjerstedt about the Transformation that the national League is considering. I was honored to be invited to the Pocantico Leadership Summit on the Rockefeller Brother's estate in Tarrytown, NY in January. That meeting of thirty League leaders was where the Transformation plan was refined and it will be considered further at the national Council meeting in June in Virginia. I would like in the next few minutes to layout for you what I envision the Transformation would mean for Oregon Leagues and to put my spin on these issues.

The Transformation plan is still fuzzy, but in my view, it generally includes these five issue areas:

1. Policy over Paperwork
2. Simplify Local League organization – Break Some Rules
3. New Membership Model – Join LWV Now!
4. New Financial model
5. Strengthen League infrastructures

Let's discuss each of these issue areas in turn, starting with:

### **1. Policy over Paperwork**

In my opinion no one joins the League to do administrative and financial work. They join because they see us active in some issue that interests them. They usually join because of our advocacy. Rarely, someone joins to work on voter service. It is only later, after they have been members for a while, that members come to understand the necessity and importance of the administrative and financial work. We must do everything that we can avoid giving new members these duties, and we should remove this kind of work from volunteers if at all possible. Let the volunteer members work on the fun stuff – advocacy and voter service. Use staff wherever possible to do those tasks that volunteers do not like to do.

### **2. Let's now discuss Simplify Local League organization – Break Some Rules**

We are an almost 100-year old organization. We have built up over the years many good and useful ways of doing things. "The League Way" is almost a mantra for League leaders. However, we must free ourselves from these old ways of doing things, whenever it fits our principles, values and purposes.

Every League has the problem of finding new leadership to some degree. If we allow ourselves to use flexible organization models, we would do much better. Sometimes an executive committee or a rotating leadership is better than a rigid structure of officers.

Sometimes, it would be better to give up all together on a formal separate nonprofit corporation and start over. The Oregon League has recently defined, in a revised policy and today in the Bylaws, the newly named "State Units" just for this purpose. These were previously and variously called "Members at Large Units," "MAL Units" or "Units at Large." Each of these was a mouthful. A State Unit structure can also be used for the rapid startup of a League in a new area. State Units do not have any administrative burdens, and members can concentrate on the "fun stuff," the advocacy and voter service. The Oregon League now has three State Units. Two of our local Leagues are hovering on the edge of viability and might well consider if they want to re-organized as State Units.



## **President's Message (continued from page 6)**

### **3. Let's now discuss a New Membership Model – Join LWV Now**

The League currently has a rather rigid concept of membership: If a person pays dues, then they are a member. We have been slowly broadening our concept of a member: From women only to all voters, from voters to any person, and recently from 18-year-olds to 16-year-olds. However, a person must still pay dues to be a member and vote within the League. What about donors? If someone visits the national website and donates some money, and then attends a League consensus meeting or an annual meeting, thinking that they have joined the League, should they be allowed to participate fully? What about people who have merely asked to receive our email action alerts? Are they members in the broad sense? These are concepts of “membership” that we do not now recognize, but we perhaps should so that the League can be a more effective and influential organization. There is a whole continuum of “membership” from the donor of thousands of dollars to the person who makes the least commitment by clicking on a button on one of our websites. This is the so called “Thick to Thin” model of membership.

If we want to be the most effective and influential organization possible, then we should be prepared to capture the least impulse of a person to engage, donate or join with us. We must remove all barriers to join with us in our work. We need a big “Join NOW” button on all our websites, where within a couple of clicks a person could be a member.

### **4. Let's now discuss a New Financial Model**

The League's current financial model is the dues and PMP system, supplemented with fundraising. This system was invented many decades ago when communications were by letter and telegram, and the internet or even cheap telephones did not yet exist. This system has fostered an insular League organization with sometimes competition and mistrust among levels of the League. Leagues often compete for donors and grants, rather than cooperating. Using modern communications, we can do much better.

The solution to me is a new system of cooperative fundraising and sharing the wealth. The ACLU, for example, uses a formula to distribute all monies among the national, state and local organizations. Your state Board has moved in this direction with its new Fundraising Policy: The Oregon League will do statewide fundraising in cooperation with local Leagues and then pay for or reimburse all state-level voter service programs without any charge to local Leagues, as had been done in the past. Our new 501(c)(3) organization structure allows us to do this more efficiently.

### **5. Let's now discuss Strengthening League infrastructures**

The national League has recently built and implemented a new Constituent Relationship Management (CRM) system based on the Salesforce system. While I was on the national Board, I served on the committee that chose this system because it had many promised capabilities to do much more than just store our membership data. It could track donors, thin membership encounters, and even media contacts over time. The national staff converted the old membership database system to the new CRM. However, in implementing the membership functions, they failed to plan for any of the promised new functions. Therefore, each League still has to have its own systems to track donors, engagers, media and advocacy. This is a huge waste, and we can do better. Every League needs these and other functions, and we would be a more effective, powerful and integrated organization if the national League would get its act together.

In the meantime, states could be offering some of these administrative functions to their local Leagues, thus lifting some of the burden from our volunteer members. I have been discussing these issues ever since I joined the National Board in 2006. I am pleased to see that we are finally discussing these issues more broadly. None of this will happen soon, and we will keep you informed and involved every step of the way.

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## **League Leaders**

***Re-Energize, Grow, Share***  
**September 8-10 Portland**

Join League Leaders from around Oregon and Washington and learn about team building, managing conflict, increasing visibility and more. Share your successes. Brainstorm with experienced leaders. Registration fee of \$100 includes housing and some meals. Space is limited. Watch for the registration form coming soon. Want to know more? Email [k.hersh@lwvor.org](mailto:k.hersh@lwvor.org).