

Welcome to Advocacy with the League of Women Voters!

Thank you for supporting our state level volunteer lobbyists and for taking on your own advocacy at the local level. The dedicated work in which our members engage allows the League to be active and effective, and we thank you. The following is a beginner's guide for how to participate generally in advocacy and also in our Lobby Corps. Please feel free to reach out to Lobby Corps members or the state office with any questions or concerns.

General League Advocacy Guidelines

League members can get involved in advocacy and lobbying by answering these two questions:

1. **Is there a League position?** Proposed action must be in line with/supported by existing League positions. If the League is not already advocating on an issue, read descriptions of the positions held by national, state, and local Leagues and write a short case for how the activity relates to one or more of those positions.
2. **Is issue advocacy approved by the appropriate level of League?** Action must be approved by the level of League corresponding to the relevant level of government. For advocacy at the state level, the description of how proposed advocacy relates to an existing position or draft of proposed activity must be sent to lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org for approval by the Executive Director. For advocacy at the local level, the local League Board must approve. The local League president is spokesperson and may designate someone to speak for the local board. Remember, just because we have a position might mean that a decision on whether or not we speak out depends on an overall strategy based on priorities at any one time.

As you know, the League is strictly nonpartisan, meaning we do not endorse political parties or candidates, but we do take positions on issues and advocate based on those positions. This is important to keep in mind and reiterate to officials as you engage in lobbying activities. Often even elected leaders only know about the League's voter service work and may not be aware of our positions or how we arrive at them. Our nonpartisan stance and fact-based positions give us credibility across the partisan political spectrum, and we must live up to that by being informed and impartial. We must participate in civil dialogue with an emphasis on talking to people on all sides of the issue.

LWVUS Positions & Principles*

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the federal level by LWVUS / EF
- At the state level by LWV-Ohio / EF
- At the local level by local Leagues / EFs (LL)

The LWVUS may only initiate action at the federal level and may only use US positions / principles.

LWV-Ohio Positions*

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the state level by LWV-Ohio / EF
- At the local level by LLs / EFs

A state League may **initiate** action at the **state level** under a state or national position, although the state League should confirm the intent / interpretation of a US position if there is any doubt.

Local League (LL) Positions

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the local level by the LL / EF

A LL may initiate action at the **local level**, given membership understanding, under its local, state or national positions – although the LL should confirm the intent / interpretation of a state or US position if there is any doubt.** Local Leagues planning an action that would involve contact with state / federal government officials where no action has been requested and no state / federal action has been taken must consult with the state / federal board.

* Local Leagues can use state and national positions to act at the local level in most cases. Some positions specifically address a particular level of government, however, and can only be used at that level. For example, the LWVUS Fiscal Policy position specifically addresses fiscal policy for the federal government.

** If the local action affects geographic areas other than the local League's, the other LLs must be consulted.

Lobby Corps and Action Alerts

The Who and What

The LWVO Lobby Corps consists of volunteer League members from across the state who choose one or two issue areas in which to build specialized knowledge. Because LWVO is strictly non-partisan, those who submit testimony on behalf of the League cannot be actively working with a political party, or running for office. The LWVO Lobby Corps, with help from the LWVO staff, works to track and influence policy at the state level to reflect the League's position on those issues.

Exactly what form that work takes depends upon what actions policymakers are proposing or pursuing and the individual Corps member's availability and commitment. It's flexible. Some members are able and choose to attend committee hearings relevant to their issue, while others track legislation. Many issues have lobbying teams consisting of several people or more, allowing for collaboration and division of work based on availability and interest. Much of the coordination occurs over email, meaning lobbyists can offer expertise and input from any part of Ohio. Corps members across issue areas also participate in twice-monthly coordinating calls on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at noon. (Call information is provided in the weekly legislative updates that lobby corps members receive after they sign up)

How much time an individual lobbyist affords to this activity is a function of time availability and willingness, and the level of activity going on in the state government around that issue. There are some issues in the LWVO portfolio that haven't seen much action or it's been very slow going, so those don't require much time. Other issues are cyclical, for example only coming up during the state budget every two years. It varies. Still other issues require more ongoing work – e.g., voter rights, women's health, or the environment. In the last few years, many issues have had to take a back seat to the Making Democracy Work Agenda: redistricting, voters' rights, voting during a pandemic, money in politics, etc.

Since a Lobby Corps member is in active relationships with legislators and committees of the General Assembly, it is important that they not be identified as members of any party or supporting and one candidate. At the level of LWVO, there is a nonpartisan policy to cover our volunteer Lobby Corps members. (See Appendix)

Lobbying and the Legislative Process

The term "lobbying" can be very intimidating, not least because its meaning is somewhat unclear and subject to many popular misconceptions. To understand the value of seeking to influence policy makers on a particular issue, it is helpful to remember that legislators are by necessity generalists. Over a thousand bills can be introduced in any given two-year session of the General Assembly, dealing with every conceivable issue affecting the state, so lawmakers cannot possibly have time to fully consider and understand all of them.

Lobbyists are people who develop specialized knowledge in a particular field with the intention of using that knowledge to make their case to public policy makers; that can be someone

working on behalf of a corporation or industry, or someone working to advance the public interest or good policy. A real-world example of how average people can inform and persuade policymakers can be seen in this account from a former Senator (<http://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/2/17/14638292/how-to-lobby-senate-congress>).

Coming across as composed and knowledgeable is important when lobbying elected officials. Make sure to know the bill number and status of the legislation, as well as the League's position and the positions of other interest groups. You should also find out some information about the legislator you are meeting with – any statements they have made about the issue in question, where their district is, some biographical information, etc. If the legislator asks a question you don't know the answer to, that's fine. Just be sure to do your research and be sure to follow up with the relevant information as soon as possible.

The most important point of engagement occurs at the committee level; this is where much of the vetting and amending of proposed legislation takes place. Every bill introduced is referred to a subject area committee, where members of the committee discuss and receive input on the bill, generally through at least three hearings. Though the precise details are decided on a case-by-case basis by the committee chair, the first hearing tends to entail "sponsor testimony," where the legislator who introduced the bill is offered a chance to present their rationale and affirmative case for the legislation. This is usually followed by at least two more hearings where the committee is presented with "proponent," "opponent," and "interested party" testimony, though there can be more hearings if the bill requires significant changes or is very controversial. Again, the precise order, subject, and number of hearings are at the discretion of the chair, as is the decision of whether or not to bring a bill up for a vote by the committee.

Committee hearings and the type of testimony that will be accepted is published in committee announcements to an email list maintained by the office of the chair. While a bill is in committee, lobbyists can provide input in several ways. You can draft and present testimony before the committee detailing the League's position on the bill – why it should or shouldn't pass, analysis of anticipated or unanticipated effects it would have or changes that could be made (see separate guides on testimony for more information). You can meet with the chair or other members of the committee one-on-one to make the case to them – this is especially effective where legislation affects one region of the state or a district disproportionately.

Once a bill is voted out of committee, it can (but does not have to) be brought up for a vote by the full chamber, also known as a floor vote. This is done by adding it to the "calendar" of bills to be considered during a particular session set by the Rules and Reference Committee. Because the Rules Committee is chaired by the head of each chamber (President of the Senate and Speaker of the House), majority party leadership has to approve any bill that is considered by the full chamber. At this point, lobbyists and League members can push leadership and Rules Committee members to schedule (or not schedule) a bill for a vote, and put pressure on other legislators to support that effort or vote a certain way on a bill in a floor vote. When a bill is brought up before the full chamber, members debate the pros and cons and offer amendments, but no one else can speak, reinforcing why it is so important to be engaged in the committee process and offer input then.

If a bill receives a majority vote on the floor of one chamber, it is then introduced in the other chamber where it goes through the same process. While it may seem like the legislature is a unitary block, even when they are controlled by the same party the two chambers can have different perspectives and opinions on an issue. For a bill to become law, both chambers must pass identical legislative language, and thus even a minor disagreement can be enough to sink a piece of legislation. One influential member who is strongly in favor or opposed can sometimes singlehandedly cause a bill to pass or to die. The process can even break down over squabbling, such as both chambers wanting the final version of a bill passed by both chambers to be “their” version, the one labeled “Senate Bill” or “House Bill.”

After a bill passes both chambers of the legislature, it goes to the Governor to be signed or vetoed. This is another potential influence point, as lobbyists can meet with or have members reach out to the Governor’s office. Ohio also provides the Governor with the power of a line-item veto on any bill containing an appropriation, meaning they can reject certain parts of a bill while signing others into law intact. The legislature can override a veto by the vote of a three-fifths majority in each chamber (20 votes in the Senate and 60 in the House).

If a bill is introduced and does not make it all the way through this process within the two-year term of the General Assembly (before the end of any even-numbered year), the bill expires. A legislator committed to the cause is likely to reintroduce the same bill in the next two-year General Assembly and continue building support and working toward its passage. It is common for even relatively minor pieces of legislation to take several General Assemblies to gain enough backers and evolve to a form that passes both chambers and is signed into law.

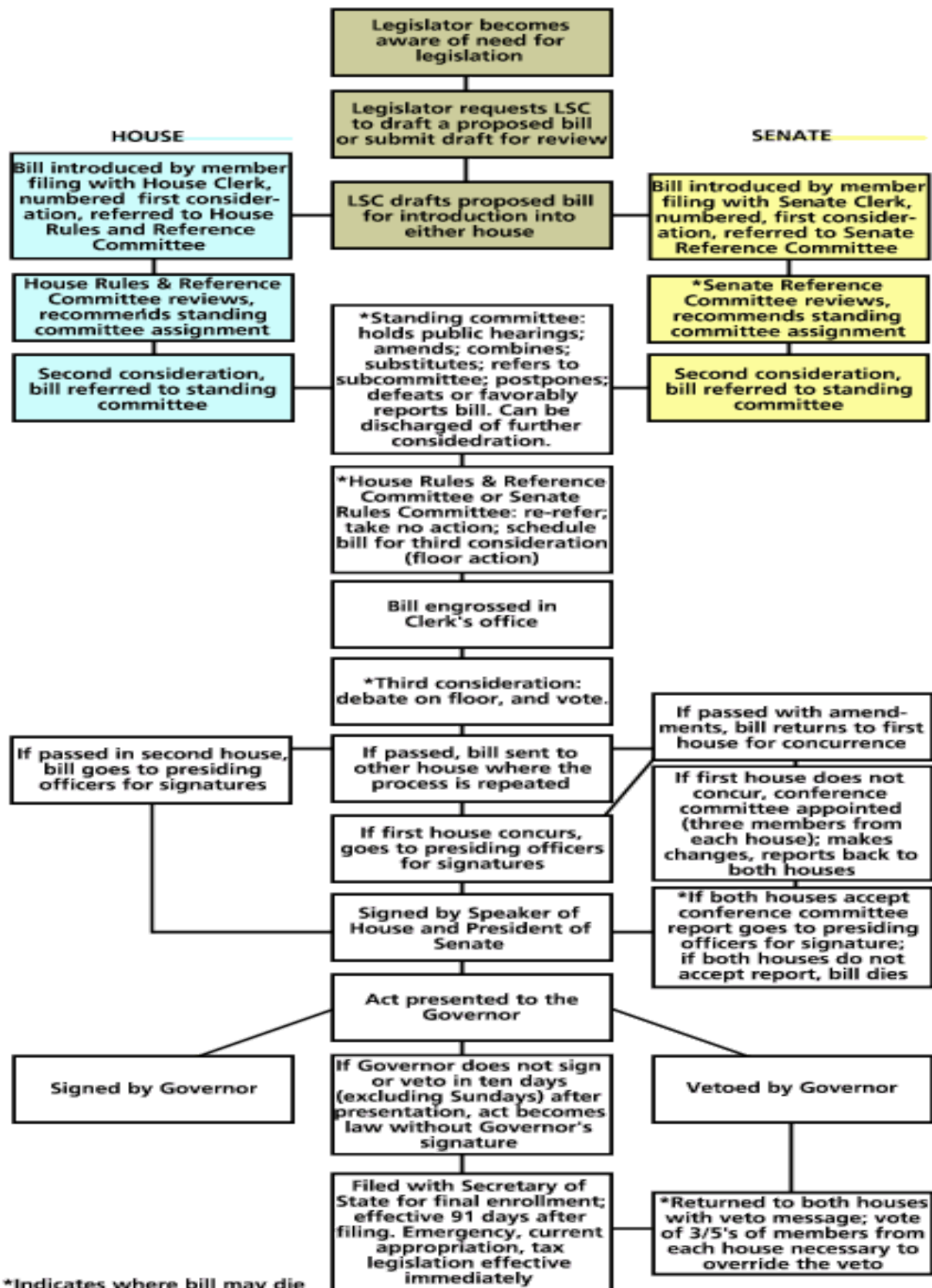
Below is a flow chart demonstrating how a bill becomes a law, taken from the **A Guidebook for Ohio Legislators** published by the [Legislative Service Commission](#). For additional, more in depth information on this topic, please refer to the [Guidebook](#).

Notice the points at which a bill can die in the General Assembly. It is just that no action is taken, and the bill sits where it is until the end of the session, at which point it dies.

On the state level, we usually offer testimony during a bill’s time in committee. This is done at the appropriate proponent or opponent times depending on our position. Lobby Corps pays attention to those opportunities as part of monitoring legislation of interest.

Action alerts are more likely as a bill hits the floor of either the Senate or the House. In special cases, there will be action alerts while a bill is in committee.

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Ohio



Testimony, Action Alerts and Action Networks

1. Testimony: State Level

Usually, testimony is offered during the proper General Assembly committee meeting, House or Senate, proponent or opponent. Testimony is prepared either by the executive director or the appropriate lobbyist following the established guidelines. Testimony contains the bill number, the name of the person offering the testimony, League role of the person offering the testimony, the League's stand on that particular bill and the rationale for that stand based on and citing League positions.

LWVO follows bills based on our positions in [Agenda for Action](#). When necessary, [Impact on Issues](#) (LWVUS positions) is used. Actions taken are dependent on an overall strategy and priorities set at conventions.

LWVO testimony approval process involves the following steps:

1. Lobbyists prepare draft written testimony
2. Lobbyists email the draft written testimony to lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org for approval.
3. Upon approval, lobbyists can testify on the proposed bill.

Lobbyists may also suggest issuing an action alert, signing onto a coalition press release, or any other lobbying activities using the League Ohio name. Email lwvoinfo@lwvohio.org with your intended activity, how it corresponds to a position, and any relevant information. Call the office if there is you feel there is an urgent legislative matter that requires immediate attention (immediate = 48 hours or less)

2. Testimony: Local Level

Local Leagues start monitoring government bodies first and foremost for transparency, accountability, and openness through some form of Observer Corps. This, along with local news outlets, local League interests and other means of communication, brings to the attention of the local League board local ordinances and legislation that might prompt action. Local Leagues testify before County Boards and Commissions, City Councils, County and local government committees, etc.

The local League president is always the spokesperson for official League testimony, even when that "testimony" comes in the form of a letter to the editor. The president can designate another spokesperson if there is an expert on the proposed policy or legislation. All testimony is approved by the local board. It should follow the same format as outlined above in section 1.

Observer Corps: Volunteers who attend government meetings as representatives of League to monitor Sunshine compliance and keep watch on issues of interest. They never take on the advocacy role, but remain neutral, nonpartisan observers.

- [LWVUS Resource Guide for Observing Your Government in Action](#) : A great general guide that includes the importance of Sunshine through getting an Observer Corps up and running
- Sunshine Law in Ohio: Ohio's public records and open meetings laws, collectively known as the "Sunshine Laws," give Ohioans access to government meetings and records.
 - **Yellow Book**: The Sunshine Laws Manual, also known as the "Yellow Book," provides summaries of Revised Code provisions and case law regarding the Ohio Public Records Act and Open Meetings Act. The [2019 edition](#) includes updates on recent open government legal decisions and law changes.
 - **Sunshine Law video**: To assist and educate members of the public in understanding and accessing Ohio's Sunshine Laws, the AGO has developed [several informational videos](#) on the topics about which they frequently receive questions.

3. Action Alerts: State Level

Most action alerts happen as bills reach the floor of one of the houses of the General assembly. In rare cases, actions are taken when a bill is still in Committee, usually for amendments or to prevent a bill from dying. In some cases, action is needed as the bill reaches the governor's desk.

All action alerts need to be sent from the LWVO office. Basically, the procedure is the same as for testimony. Again, these will fit into the priorities/ strategy determined either by State Convention or the LWVO Board/Office. It is not the narrow focus, but the bigger picture that matters.

Action alerts are facilitated if the lobbyist puts together a draft, just like testimony. Remember to use best practices: clear, concise messages, include contact information for the legislators, give additional rationale and talking points, reference League positions. Allow plenty of time for alerts to be processed. If quick action is needed (48 hours or less), call the LWVO office: 614-469-1505.

Some Leagues find it helpful to re-issue the state action alert with the specific contact information for their area. Some Leagues even will use the information to pay a visit to their local legislator. Also, it is important to respond as a constituent. Legislators do not want to hear from those outside their district.

4. Action Alerts: Local Level

Again, very similar to testimony at the local level. The local board must approve and issue the alert. Make sure you are reflecting what is in your positions and/or clearly state the state position being used. Use the best practices: clear, concise, include specific action, include specific contact information, etc. The easier it is to take action, the more likely it is that action will be taken.

5. Action Networks

Over time we are trying to establish different types of networks in order to be more effective in our advocacy. These include:

- **Lobby Corps teams:** Instead of one member trying to monitor an array of issues under a particular position, several lobbyists form a team, each taking a different aspect of the issue. For example: natural resources. Aspects: renewable energy, clean water, recyclables, climate crisis, etc.
- **Lobbyist and local League committees/teams:** The lobbyist on the issue presents programs at local Leagues, gathering names and contact information of interested members or committees. These contacts are then used for visiting the local legislator, special messaging, liaisons to local groups.
- **Official coalition membership (see below):** This allows us to be more efficient by allowing partners and coalitions with which we are in agreement to take the lead.
- **Temporary coalitions/partnerships:** Very issue and time focused. Allows us to expand outreach and messaging.
- **Local Leagues partnering when appropriate:** These could be county issues or regional issues.

Coalitions and Partners

In order to effectively advocate on the many issues on which we take a position, the League works with numerous other individuals and organizations through coalitions or partnerships. These working relationships allow us to cooperate and collaborate with others who have issue and policy expertise, which bolsters our advocacy impact. Our membership in an advocacy coalition indicates having formally signed onto a working agreement or letter with other groups. Coalitions are often made up of a wide variety of groups and may be relevant for long or short term periods. Working relationships with partner organizations are more informal, albeit often stronger as we regularly work on similar issues.

Knowing who our partners are can also help you on the local level. Following the guidelines the LWVO Board has set, you also can work in partnership with others at the local level without LWVO board approval. Educational programs lend themselves to partnering that raises greater awareness about issues and the need to advocate.

LWVO/EF Operational Guidelines: Joining a Coalition

- The coalition's major issues should mesh with League positions and be nonpartisan, although there need not be a League position for every issue with which the coalition is concerned. The aims of the coalition must not conflict with League positions.
- The major goals of the coalition should be in accord with the state program and the adopted action priorities.

- The coalition's activities should provide additional effectiveness to the overall efforts to achieve the League's organizational, advocacy, or educational goals.
- The members of the coalition should be organizations and individuals with whom the League can work effectively. The League should have confidence in the leadership of the coalition and may serve in a leadership capacity.
- Expenditures for work with the coalition, including staff and volunteer time, as well as cash and in-kind expenses, should be worth the investment.
- The League representative to a coalition or appointee to a Board or Commission must have the prior approval of the State League President, or her designee, before making any formal or public statement of League position on a specific issue.
- Joining or resigning from a coalition shall be a State Board decision.
- If a coalition that the League belongs to or is considering joining will concentrate its activities on supporting or opposing candidates, then the League shall divest itself of association.

Coalitions With Which We Have Worked

Advocates for Ohio's Future - Advocates for Ohio's Future works to maintain vital public services, health, human services and early care and education at levels that meets people's basic needs and protects vulnerable populations.

Fair Districts = Fairs Elections Coalition is committed to reining in partisan gerrymandering. We seek fair state legislative and congressional maps that keep communities together because we believe that all elections should be fair and meaningful.

Freedom of Choice Ohio - Freedom of Choice Ohio (FOCO) was established in the mid-1970's as a pro-choice coalition to advocate for reproductive rights and to provide member organizations and the public with information and education on public policy matters related to protecting and preserving reproductive freedom, including the availability of safe, legal abortion and contraception. Membership is comprised of local and/or state organizations that support freedom of choice.

Ohio Census Advocacy Coalition (OCAC) is a nonpartisan network of statewide nonprofit organizations, advocacy organizations, and trusted faith, business, education, and community leaders working to prepare for and conduct outreach to encourage full participation in the 2020 census, with a focus on historically undercounted or "hard-to-count" ("HTC") populations. The coalition will be the coordinating body of non-profit organizations including statewide municipal associations, grassroots organizations, and direct service organizations mobilized to support statewide census efforts. The ultimate goal of the OCAC is to secure a complete census count in Ohio.

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence - The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence (OCAGV) started as a committee of volunteers concerned about gun violence. OCAGV's goal is to increase safety in Ohio in regards to firearms. They educate about gun homicides, suicides, and unintentional deaths and injuries. The Coalition supports and encourages local, state and federal legislation to reduce the accessibility of firearms in our communities and families.

Ohioans to Stop Executions - Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE) was founded in 1987. Its purpose is to end the use of capital punishment in the state of Ohio through education.

Advocacy Partners

All Voting is Local protects and expands citizens' freedom to vote through advocacy and empowerment. We collaborate with local election officials, activist networks, and nonpartisan community organizations to solve the problems voters face when trying to make their voices heard.

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio - COHHIO is involved in a range of housing assistance services in Ohio, including homeless prevention, emergency shelters, transitional housing and permanent affordable housing with linkages to supportive services. COHHIO assists hundreds of housing organizations and homeless service providers in Ohio through public policy advocacy, training and technical assistance, research and public education.

Common Cause Ohio is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to strengthen public participation in our democracy and ensure that public officials and public institutions are accountable and responsive to citizens. Through a powerful combination of coalition building, lobbying and litigation, grassroots organizing, policy development, research and public education, they spotlight local, state and national issues that affect every Ohioan.

Ohio Environmental Council - The Ohio Environmental Council is the state's premier advocate for our air, land and water. For over 35 years, the Ohio Environmental Council has been behind the scenes and on the front lines of Ohio's most important environmental victories. OEC works with individuals, government, local groups, and businesses to unleash the power of innovation to enhance the quality of life in Ohio communities and sustain the natural systems upon which all life depends.

Ohio Voice works to support and grow the ecosystem of non-profit, non-partisan organizations doing year-round civic engagement with underrepresented communities in order to improve people's lives.

The Sierra Club works to protect communities, wild places, and the planet itself. The Ohio Chapter advocates for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and public transit; and defends Ohio's forests, state parks, nature preserves, and water resources.

The following are organizations that are a helpful resource for state legislative updates and policy analysis briefs.

- o **Policy Matters Ohio** <http://www.policymattersohio.org/> Policy Matters, a non-profit policy research institute, creates a more vibrant, equitable, sustainable and inclusive Ohio through research, strategic communications, coalition building and policy advocacy. Their work falls into four major and related buckets: 1. Quality public structures: adequate and fair taxes to support the schools, neighborhoods and infrastructure we all need; 2. A fair economy: good jobs, worker rights, smart training, and opportunity for all; 3. Pathways out of poverty: reasonable regulations to help families earn and save, build assets, avoid unfair loans, and build a better future for themselves and their children; and 4. Sustainable communities: investments in transit, renewable energy, conservation and other smart solutions that create jobs and support communities. They work to create an economy that works for everyone.
- o **One Ohio Now** <http://www.oneohionow.org/> One Ohio Now is a statewide **coalition** of 100+ health and human service, labor, and advocacy partners advocating for great public services that lead to stronger communities, and the revenue to pay for those services.
- o **Innovation Ohio** <http://innovationohio.org/> Innovation Ohio is a unique organization that blends progressive public policy analysis and hard-hitting research with a single-minded determination to drive this information into the hands of the media, policymakers, and our allies to help influence policy decisions and shape public opinion. Innovation Ohio pushes back on extremist statehouse policies that hurt working families and take our state in the wrong direction. And working with local leaders, they help push forward progressive policy solutions that improve our economy and strengthen middle-class families.
- o **Women's Public Policy Network** <http://www.womenspublicpolicynetwork.org/> The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network is a coalition of key women's advocacy organizations focused on promoting policies that create economic security for women and strengthen Ohio families. In order to make a meaningful impact, The Women's Public Policy Network believes that policymakers must advance public policy that addresses the following issue areas: 1. Promoting an economic security agenda for women; 2. Ensuring fairness and opportunity in the workplace; and 3. Improving women's health and well-being.

Resources to Stay Informed and Connected

Building expertise on an issue and staying abreast of policy developments can seem difficult, and while it is an intentional, ongoing process, the following are some resources and tips that you may find helpful.

The LWVO Legislative Tracker is updated and sent weekly to Lobby Corps members when the General Assembly (GA) is in session, and is also included in the monthly LLU. It contains a listing of bills that we are tracking, our positions, the history/status of the bill, and attachments to testimony (if applicable).

The Statehouse News Bureau provides educational, comprehensive coverage of legislation, elections, issues and other activities surrounding the Statehouse to Ohio's public radio and television stations. To this day, the Bureau remains the only broadcast outlet dedicated to in-depth coverage of state government news and topics of statewide interest.

Agenda for Action contains all of LWVO's positions and includes a history of action on issues. Reading the entirety of any League positions that are related to the policy area you are working on is a critical first step in the lobbying process. League positions can be found on the LWVO website. Testimony provided by League lobbyists in the past can also be helpful, which is linked in the LWVO legislative tracker shared weekly in the Legislative Update.

Sign up for legislative committee list-serves to receive email updates related to committees, including time, location, and agenda of scheduled meetings. You can contact the committee chair's office to be added to the committee email list. This will let you track bills moving through the committee process and provide information about how to submit and present testimony when appropriate. Some committees require testimony be submitted at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing, others have different deadlines and requirements; if this information is not laid out in the committee announcement, you can contact the chair's office and ask their staff.]

Legiscan (<https://legiscan.com>) is a service that tracks bills. At the concerned individual level it is free. You can register, create a password and list bills you are following. Email alerts are sent when there is movement of the bill.

The Ohio Channel live streams legislative sessions and many committee meetings at <http://ohiochannel.org/>. Recordings are also available to watch on demand.

State Representatives' email addresses are standard: RepXX@ohiohouse.gov, where XX is their two-digit district number (e.g. 01, 02 ... 10, 11, etc.). State Senator email addresses are typically lastname@ohiosenate.gov (unless there is more than one senator with the same last name or the last name is common. Call the LWVO office to confirm).

Staying connected to legislators who support the League's position on a particular issue can be a helpful resource, particularly those who are "leading the charge." They can share their issue expertise and their office (particularly their staffers) can help you stay aware of relevant developments in the legislature.

NOTES & END REMARKS

The League has a portfolio of positions built on a solid foundation of facts and careful study. We are uniquely situated to provide an open-minded, impartial perspective – why shouldn't we share that as widely as possible? Our dedicated Lobby Corps of member volunteers are key to this effort, taking on an issue and mastering it to educate policymakers and the public and advance the League's position.

That sounds intimidating – I've never lobbied before. Where do I even start?

None of our Lobby Corps members are professionals, and every one of them started out just like you. All it takes is the knowledge of what you care about and the desire to do something about it. Our lobbyists take part to different degrees, in different capacities, and from different parts of the state, so there's room for everyone in our Lobby Corps. Even if you're unsure, you can start

taking part in our twice-monthly, hour-long Lobby Lunch conference call to get a feel for what's going on in the Statehouse and what the Corps is doing about it.

Why isn't the League lobbying on [insert issue you care about]?

We've been waiting for you! Any issue where the League (at the national, state, or local level) has a position is eligible for lobbying efforts. Write up a brief case for how the proposed action aligns with one of the League's positions and submit it to the President, Advocacy Chair, and Executive Director for approval and you're well on your way!

Other useful information...

- o Volunteer lobbyists can lobby on non-LWV issues on their personal time
- o Only paid lobbyists have to register with the state, not volunteers

Appendices

Political Activity – Nonpartisan Policy Statement for LWVO Volunteer Lobby Corps (9/2019)

Although the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) routinely studies, comments and takes action with respect to governmental issues, measures and policies, it does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. The volunteer Lobby Corps is important to this advocacy. LWVO values and relies upon the many skills and types of experience that individuals members bring to the Lobby Corps, including those acquired in public life through elective or appointive office. Involvement in public and political activities is encouraged by the League of Women Voters for all citizens.

However, certain activities must be limited or avoided to preserve the League's nonpartisan reputation. With Lobby Corps, there needs to be discretion for those who are actively leading our efforts in advocacy. In giving testimony or speaking on behalf of the League position, the volunteer lobbyist must be recognized as nonpartisan. Therefore, some basic limitations on Lobby Corps members' political activity, while they are serving in this capacity, are necessary to protect the nonpartisan stature of the League as an organization.

In order to balance these goals, the LWVO Board adopts the following policy, which shall be reviewed, and may be amended, at the beginning of each fiscal year.

A. Political Activity

1. **Elected Office.** Lobby Corps members shall not seek or hold any partisan elective office at and level of government. If a member declares for an elective, partisan office, the member shall resign from Lobby Corps. Nonpartisan office positions must be approved by the Executive Committee.
2. **Political Party Office.** A Lobby Corps member shall not serve in any official position in a political party at any level of government.
3. **Political Campaigns.** A Lobby Corps member shall not publicly support a candidate for partisan political office, including public display of signage or buttons. A Lobby Corps member shall not chair a political campaign or administer fundraising for a political campaign, chair a campaign event, be a spokesperson, or work in any other significant way in the campaign of a candidate for a partisan office at any level of government. A Lobby Corps member may participate in behind-the-scenes efforts for candidates such as telephoning, stuffing envelopes, writing position papers, etc.
4. **Campaign Contributions.** A Lobby Corps member may make campaign contributions to campaigns or candidates for any elective office at any level of government so long as the contribution is not designated an endorsement of the candidate, or to other entities contributing to such races. Lobby Corps members are expected to act with discretion with regard to campaign contributions and to consult with the President in the event there is a question as to the propriety of a particular contribution.
5. **Social and Other Media.** A Lobby Corps member shall not indicate her/his political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, nor on social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify the individual as a member of the LWVO Lobby Corps.

6. Other Political Activity. A Lobby Corps member shall not circulate a nominating petition nor a referendum petition unless the referendum petition is for an issue endorsed by LWV Ohio. A Lobby Corps member may sign a nominating or referendum petition, and attend gatherings to meet candidates including fundraising events and political party events. A Lobby Corps member may hold office in another organization that supports or opposes political parties or candidates so long as candidate endorsement is not a principal function of the organization.

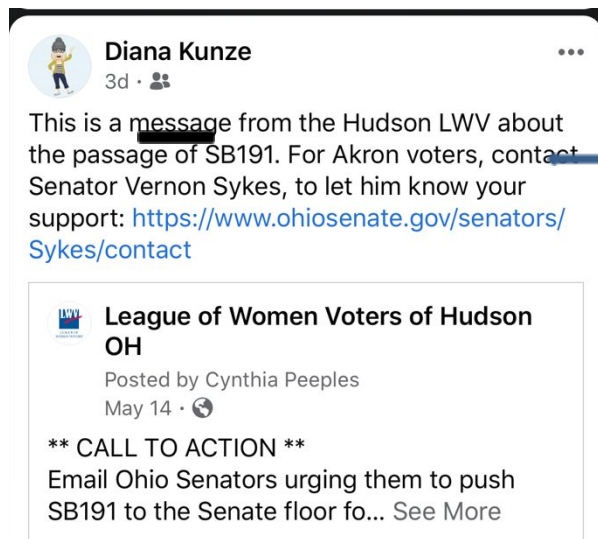
7. Additional Clarification. Lobby Corps members shall present questions about all other specific situations, where any potential question of or compromise in the appearance of League nonpartisanship is potentially suggested, to the President of LWVO Board whenever the foregoing policies do not resolve the issue. Lobby Corps members are to use discretion and be nonpartisan in public communications.

B. A Lobby Corps member may not speak or work against a League position in any way.

C. The League of Women Voters does not desire or presume to regulate the political activity of relatives, spouses, or domestic partners of Lobby Corps members. However, it is incumbent upon current members to preserve a clear separation between their own nonpartisan stance, and any partisan activity undertaken by those with whom they are publicly connected. In the event that a conflict may arise with the political activity of a relative, spouse or domestic partner, the member is expected to bring the issue to the Board for resolution.

Some Best Practices

1. Craft short, to the point messages that can be copied and pasted.
Encourage members to personalize the message, especially with their own experiences.
2. Provide the actual links to the actual contact pages of legislators if using email.
3. If asking members to phone provide the phone number and the message.
4. If using social media to communicate with members, don't assume members know how to use what you provide. Show them.



**** CALL TO ACTION ****

Email Ohio Senators urging them to push SB191 to the Senate floor fo... See More



SAFE, FAIR, FREE ELECTIONS
EMAIL Ohio Senators: Ask them to push **SB191** to the Senate floor for a 'Yes' vote

Ohio State Senator William Coley, II (R)

EMAIL <https://www.ohiosenate.gov/senators/coley/contact>

MESSAGE

I am concerned about the safety and right of every registered voter in the Nov. 3 General Election. A necessary first step is passage of SB191 which would allow online request for an absentee ballot. It has strong support of the Secretary of State and the Ohio Association of Election Officials. Please get it out on the Senate Floor immediately for a vote.

Note message. Diana is Hudson League but lives in Akron. She made it applicable to her personal Akron friends. This could be more personal. This example is from LWVH action, but all posts will be coming from LWVO. They then can be shared on local League pages as well as personal pages.

5. Ask members to share the messages you put up on social media. They need to share it with a personal message in order to get it out into their network.

Longer message, but if person doesn't click, the important pieces are just below.

6. Challenge members not only to take action, but to get the message out for action to 5 of their friends and report back to you when they have.

7. Connect articles to the message when possible.



While these examples deal with Facebook, you can accomplish the same thing using an email campaign to reach your membership. Encourage the emails to be forwarded to friends with personal messages.