



League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

Effective Lobbying from our
LWVMA and LWVUS Positions



Support vs. Advocacy

- When lobbying, seek advocacy
 - Support means “I’ll vote for it when and if it comes up.”
 - Remember the Bottle Bill
 - Senate and House Leadership and Committee chairs are very powerful
 - Bill has to get out of joint committee first
- Advocacy means working to get the bill to a vote
 - Talking to other legislators
 - Testifying at committee hearings
 - Speaking out publicly



League vs. Individual Lobbying

- Lobbying as a League Member
 - Request from LWVUS or LWVMA or local board
 - Action Alert, LWVMA board or special request
 - Must be an issue or proposed legislation on which LWVMA or LWVUS has taken a position
 - Where We Stand and Impact on Issues
 - <http://lwvma.org/advocacy/league-positions/>
- The League speaks with One Voice
 - Cannot publically disagree with a League position as a League member



Lobbying as an Individual

- Advocating for an issue important to you is encouraged
- Do Not say you are from the LWV or a League Member
- If you are a league leader, be careful
 - Specifically, League officers and prominent members
 - If your legislator or an aide thinks of you as “the League”
 - Make it very clear you are there as an individual
- If any questions or concerns
 - Call the LWVMA office (617-523-2999)



Making Personal Connections

- Your main contact will usually be a staff member:
 - Young, highly competent, poorly paid and overworked
 - Keeping track of a zillion items for the legislator
 - Won't be in that job for many years
 - Unless a Chief of Staff for a Senator
 - Knowledgeable about other aides
 - Eager to do an terrific job keeping their legislator well informed on specific topics and constituent contacts
 - Make certain the aide(s) know you appreciate their expertise!



Lobbying Techniques and Tactics

- Get to know your legislators before you *need* them
 - Invite them to a meet 'n greet event
 - Invite them to ALL League educational & advocacy events
 - Make an in-district appointment through staff or go to open hours
 - House members have a legislative aide
 - Senate members have a staff director and legislative aide(s), some with specialties



Do Your Homework

- Be prepared on the issue
 - Have fact sheets, your research, any league position statements or testimony
 - Read the bill and any similar bills
- Know if the legislator has a stand on your issue
 - Did they sponsor or co-sponsor legislation?
 - Have they supported or opposed similar items in the past?
- Be time conscious
 - Plan to communicate your position and hear theirs in the allotted time.



Managing the Appointment

- Work with their availability
- State your agenda or topic when making an appointment
 - State bills that you are specifically following
 - State your local league membership (if appropriate)
- Arrive early, confirm time allotted
 - Take responsibility for ending on time
- Ask about *their* priorities, then share yours
 - Ask about bills they actively oppose and those they are sponsoring
 - Tell them why, if time permits
- Send a thank you, including any information asked of you



Lobbying in Person

- Bring:
 - Card to leave with your contact information
 - A crib sheet to help you remember your goals
 - Names and positions of aides
 - Bill numbers and position summaries
 - Documentation
 - League testimony, fact sheets, Action Alert, etc
- Keep on a single topic
- Arrive early, leave on time, send a thank you



Using League and Other Resources

- Know the state and national positions.
- Use websites to get more information
 - Search Mass.gov
 - LWWUS
 - LWWMA
 - Issue specific sites may be useful
- Call the state league office: 617-523-2999



Doing Research On-line

- Mass.gov site
 - <http://www.malegislature.gov/>
 - Access legislators information
 - Hearing schedules
 - Mass General Laws texts
- LWVMA.org
- Need help?
 - Call the LWVMA office @ 617-523-2999



Responding to Action Alerts

- LWV is most effective when *we all* participate
 - Action Alerts generate strength of numbers
 - Know and state the urgency
 - The Action Alerts tell you when the hearing or vote is scheduled
- Contact *your* legislator(s)
 - Phone call is more effective than email.
 - Know your precinct before you call
 - You will be speaking to an aide. Get their name and use it
 - Say you are a League member and a constituent



Action Alerts - Continued

- State the Bill Number(s)
 - If a senator, give senate bill #, if a rep, the house bill #
 - They will only know both if they are already advocates
- Put things in your own words
 - Use the bill number and supporting arguments
 - Tell why it matters to you, using the Alert for talking points
 - Be concise
 - If you have a personal angle, use it.
- Request advocacy for the bill, not just support
 - If emailing, request a specific response
 - Forward specific responses to lwmvma@lwmvma.org with bill number in subject line



Issue Specific Lobby Days

- Do this When
 - An issue is critical in your district
 - Your legislator is on a key committee that the LWVMA needs to influence
- Plan the day
 - Have an education session in district beforehand
 - Make appointments for both Senators and Reps
 - State your local League affiliation and the number of attendees
 - Have different speakers for specific points
 - Keep on topic



Want LWVMA to Take a Stand?

- YOU want the LWVMA to take a stand on proposed legislation
- Learn the relevant bill number(s) and prime sponsors
 - Go to Mass.gov
- Review our positions
 - Which ones do you think might apply?
- Call the LWVMA office
 - Ask to speak to Program and Action Chair
 - Clearly state why you believe this is worthwhile and necessary



Go Forth and Lobby

- Persistence is the most important trait
 - Almost nothing passes on the first try
 - Many of our biggest successes have come after several years of being there every session
 - Do not get discouraged
- Mostly legislators won't bite you
 - They are eager to know constituent positions
 - You can help them by providing information/ rationales for positions
- Developing individual relationships with legislators working towards the same goal really helps