



## **POLICY FOR PARTICIPATING IN COALITIONS**

Approved by the LWVMA Board November 5, 2012; revised and approved January 22, 2016; revised and approved March 23, 2022

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts can join and participate in coalitions to more effectively achieve its advocacy, educational or organizational goals. Coalitions are defined as alliances that bring the LWVMA together with other organizations for joint action toward a specific and well-defined goal.

The LWVMA Board of Directors must explicitly approve the LWVMA joining or resigning from all coalitions.

### **A. Considerations for joining a coalition**

The following considerations will guide the LWVMA board in determining whether to join a coalition.

1. There must be clear and compelling reasons for joining the coalition.
2. The coalition must be nonpartisan, and participation in the coalition must not compromise the League's nonpartisanship. LWVMA will immediately withdraw from any coalition that participates in partisan activity. The LWVMA may join coalitions in which other members are partisan organizations, but all coalition activity must be nonpartisan.
3. The coalition's major issues should follow League positions, though there need not be a League position on every issue with which the coalition is concerned. The aims and actions of the coalition must be in accord with League positions.
4. Working with the coalition should accomplish more than the LWVMA can accomplish working on its own.
5. The members of the coalition should be organizations with which the League can work effectively and which are known to be responsible and reliable.
6. The coalition should be credible and financially viable, and the board should have confidence in its leadership.

7. The board *may* require the following information about the coalition if coalition participation will involve a financial commitment by the LWVMA:

- stated positions
- names of participating organizations, a description of engagement in partisan activity, and their website addresses
- names and background of board members and executives

8. Resource demands for work with the coalition (including staff and volunteer time, as well as cash and in-kind expenses) should be worth the investment. Expenditures must be approved by the board.

9. There must be a League member willing to be the LWVMA's representative to the coalition who has the time, knowledge and personal commitment to serve on behalf of the League.

#### **B. Representatives to coalitions**

1. The LWVMA board will vote to approve the LWVMA representative(s) and, if appropriate, alternates to all coalitions. Those wishing to be the League's representative to a coalition submit the coalition application to the board.

2. On the resignation of an LWVMA representative, the board may vote to approve a replacement.

3. A copy of this policy will be given annually to all LWVMA representatives to coalitions.

4. Legislative specialists who are coalition representatives will keep the Legislative Action Committee (LAC) chair informed of coalition activities. The LAC chair will periodically update the board on relevant legislative coalition activities. Representatives to non-legislative coalitions will keep the LWVMA board informed of those coalition activities.

5. Whenever the LWVMA board decides to join or withdraw from a coalition, the designated coalition representative shall notify the coalition in writing.

6. The representative may serve in a leadership capacity in a coalition.

7. The coalition representative is responsible for ensuring that coalition actions do not violate LWVMA's Nonpartisan Policy or positions on issues.

8. The representative should engage League membership in coalition activities when appropriate.

9. The representative is responsible for ensuring that the use of the League's name on statements, letters, press releases, publications or any other materials is reviewed and approved by a League president/co-president or designated representative.

10. The LWVMA representative can publicly speak for the League on coalition matters only if authorized to do so by the president/co-president.

### **C. Annual review and approval of coalitions**

1. At the beginning of each legislative session, the Legislative Action Committee chair will review all coalition participation by legislative specialists and provide a written report to the board that includes the following:

- a list of all coalitions that LWVMA is participating in
- the name of the LWVMA representative for each coalition.

2. Designated representatives to coalitions that are not part of the LAC's work shall submit a similar report to the board annually.

3. The LWVMA board will review and vote on LWVMA's participation in and representatives to all coalitions annually or, in the case of coalitions formed to work on specific legislation, at the beginning of each legislative session.

4. The LWVMA representative can recommend to the board at any time that the LWVMA withdraw from a coalition. The representative should state the reasons for that recommendation, and the board will vote on whether to continue as a coalition member, using the criteria for joining coalitions as a guideline. The board can also determine on its own whether to withdraw from a coalition.

5. The LWVMA board will review and vote on this policy as necessary.