



League of Women Voters® of Indiana

Issue Advocate Handbook

2016

Dear LWVIN Issue Advocate,

Thank you for your willingness to serve the LWV and your community in this important way. Without your leadership and commitment to service, the League of Women Voters would not be able to make a difference in the state.

YOU make that possible!

By monitoring issues and legislation, being well-versed in LWV positions, and building contacts and collaborative partners around the state, you are making Indiana a better place and you are providing vital leadership skills to the LWVIN.

This handbook is meant to help you understand your role as an Issue Advocate and what the LWVIN expects from you while in this position. The handbook is also a guide to what you can expect from the LWVIN board in terms of resources, response times, and assistance.

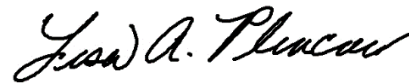
Successful advocacy efforts rest on all of us working together to make the change we want to see in the world.

Thank you again for your service.

Sincerely,



Erin Kelley
LWVIN Co-President



Lisa Plencner
LWVIN Co-President

Table of Contents

Section 1	
Common Language	Pg. 4
Section 2	
The Issue Advocate’s Role	Pg. 5
Section 3	
LWV Positions	Pg. 6
Section 4	
Monitoring Legislation	Pgs. 7—10
Section 5	
Communication	Pgs. 11—16
Section 6	
Action & Education	Pgs. 17—20
Section 7	
Serving Local LWVs	Pgs. 21 & 22
Section 8	
Summary of Duties	Pg. 23
Section 9	
Guidelines for Action by Local Leagues in the Indiana General Assembly	Pg. 24

Section 1

COMMON LANGUAGE

Making sure we use a common language to describe our advocacy work on behalf of the LWVIN is a crucial element for success. For example, as “Advocates” rather than “Lobbyists,” we are tasked to remember the importance of our educative as well as legislative roles.

ACTION: Promoting the LWV's positions on local, state and national public policy issues to government officials, the media and the public.

ACTION ALERT (aka CALL TO ACTION): Request to take action in support of a League position.

ADVOCACY: Advocacy is a broader concept than lobbying. While lobbying (see definition below) can be a part of an advocacy strategy, advocacy is aimed at increasing civic participation by providing opportunities for LWV member voices to be heard, building relationships, and educating the public.

LOBBYING: Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation through direct communication with elected officials or their staff as well as urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation. (Lobbying efforts must be funded through general operating funds. See page 17.)

POSITION: A statement of the League's point of view on an issue, arrived at through member study and agreement (consensus or concurrence), approved by the appropriate board and used as a basis for League action.

PRINCIPLES: Governmental standards and policies supported by the League as a whole. They constitute the authorization for adoption of program at all levels.

PROGRAM: Selected governmental issues chosen by members at the local, state and national levels for study and action.

LWV NOTE

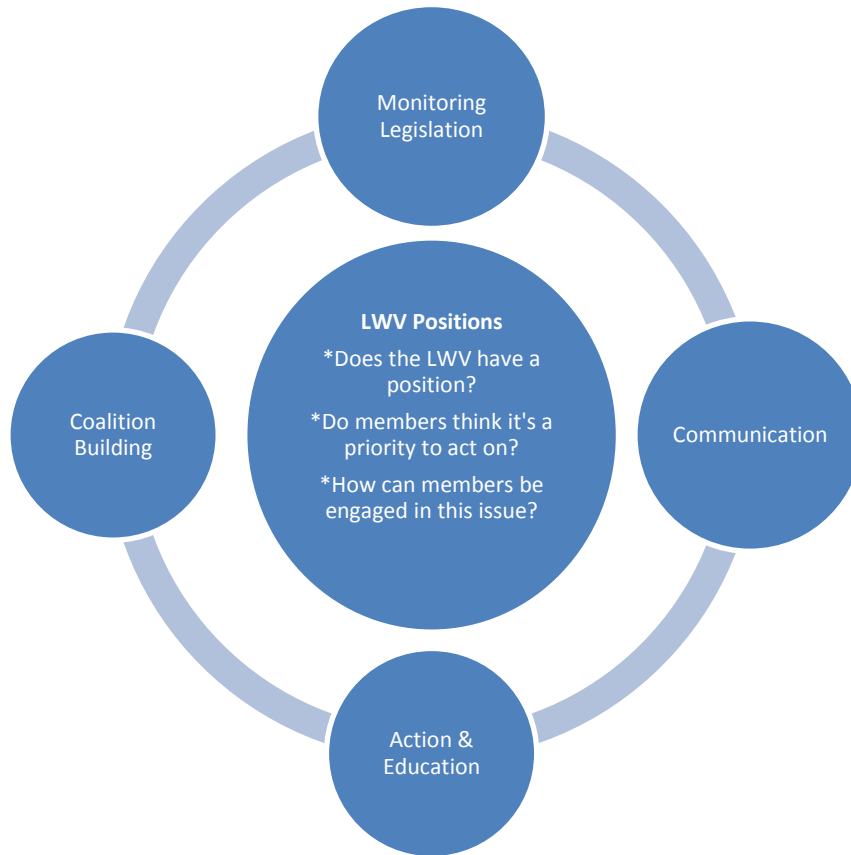
✓ *Be mindful of “League lingo” when talking with non-LWV members.*

✓ *Never assume the public knows an acronym, government agency, or politician's name.*

✓ *Your role as “advocate” is to help educate as well as to advance a particular LWV position.*

THE ISSUE ADVOCATE'S ROLE

Issue Advocates are guided by LWV positions and then work within four broad categories:



More specifically, as an LWVIN Issue Advocate, your role is to . . .

- Be knowledgeable of the LWV (state and/or national) position related to your issue
- Monitor legislation in the Indiana General Assembly &/or U.S. Congress
- Communicate by:
 - Submitting Issue Advocate Reports to the LWVIN board
 - May be asked to turn these reports into e-news or Voter articles
 - Cultivating an issue email list consisting of the LWVIN board, local LWV presidents, and local members (and others) interested in receiving Updates and Action Alerts from the Issue Advocate, with (co)president permission
- Engage in action and education by:
 - Preparing testimony and/or Letters to the Editor
 - Providing educational opportunities for members
 - Interacting with and educating elected officials on the LWV's positions
 - Monitoring LWVIN and LWVUS resources
- Participate in and/or build coalitions

Section 3

LWV POSITIONS

Any and all actions on an issue **MUST** be rooted in either an LWVIN or LWVUS policy position.

For a full listing of LWVIN policy positions, visit the LWVIN web site at www.lwvin.org and click on “Positions.”

LWVUS policy positions are found in *Impact on Issues* which can be downloaded from their web site at www.lwv.org.

Advocate Tip

Keep a saved copy of “your” position and its history handy both in a computer file and as a hardcopy. You never know when you’ll need to consult it!

MONITORING LEGISLATION

Background

Indiana has a part-time legislature that does not meet year-round. The General Assembly convenes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. During odd-numbered years the legislature meets for 61 days (not necessarily consecutively) and must adjourn by April 30. During even-numbered years, the legislature meets for 30 days (not necessarily consecutively) and must adjourn by March 15.

Odd-numbered sessions are nicknamed “long sessions” and even-numbered sessions are dubbed “short sessions.” The General Assembly passes its two year budget during the odd-numbered long sessions.

The Indiana Senate and House of Representatives each have several committees that are charged with overseeing certain areas of the state. Committees vary in size, from three to eleven members. The committees are chaired by senior members of the majority party. Senators and representatives can be members of multiple committees. Most legislation begins within the committees who have responsibility for the area that the bill will affect. Once approved by a committee, a bill can be entered into the agenda for debate and vote in the full chamber. Although not common, bills can be voted on by the full house without going through the committee process.

Source: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indiana_General_Assembly

How a Bill Becomes a Law

First Reading – Each bill presented by a legislator is first read by title in the house of its origin. At this point, either the speaker of the House or the president pro tempore of the Senate (depending on which chamber is the house of origin) refers the bill to a committee. Alternatively, either house has the authority to vote not to receive a bill on its introduction (first reading). Also, a motion for indefinite postponement or to table the bill may be made from the floor at any time throughout these steps. If approved, either of these motions has the effect of preventing any further progress.

Advocate Tip

Bills that originate in the House will have four numbers (e.g., HB1003) and Senate bills will have one to three (e.g. SB6, SB14, or SB122).

Committee Action – The committee’s responsibility is to consider the merits of a bill and determine whether it can be improved by amending the language or by making additions or deletions. It is required that committee schedules be posted on House and Senate bulletin boards. Committee hearings are open to the public so that interested parties may speak on the measures being heard. The committee’s final action is to report the bill back to the legislative body with the committee report. If the committee report is adopted, the bill is printed and ready for further action. However, the committee to which a bill is referred can kill it simply by refraining from acting on it. (The bill can be forced out of committee by bringing the issue before the entire legislative body, but this rarely occurs.)

Second Reading – When the bill is brought up for second reading, it is ready for “amendment, recommitment or engrossment.” At this point it can be recommitted to a committee for further study, or legislators have an opportunity to propose amendments. Amendments must win the approval of a majority of the legislators present and voting in order to be accepted. The bill is then “ordered to engrossment.” This means that with its amendments the printed bill is authenticated as being accurate and genuine. If the amendments are extensive or complicated, the bill may be reprinted at this time. Sometimes, a motion for indefinite postponement or to table is made from the floor at the point of Second Reading. Attempts also may be made to amend the bill in such a way that it will stand less chance of passage.

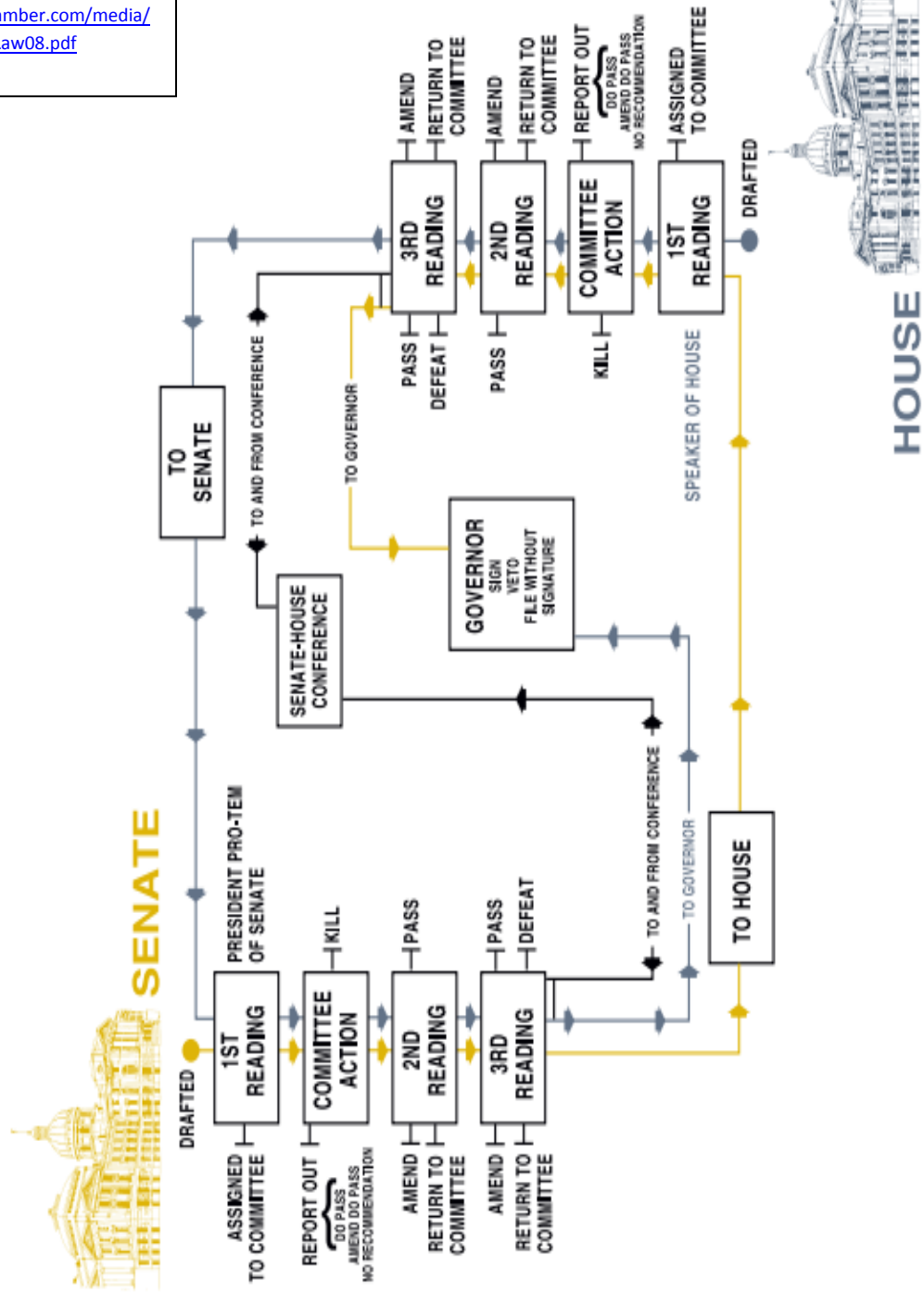
Third Reading – The engrossed bill is again called up to be read. After the reading, legislators have an opportunity for debate on its merits before the final vote is taken. It must receive a constitutional majority, meaning 51 “aye” votes in the House or 26 “aye” votes in the Senate, before it is passed. Approved bills are sent to the other chamber, where the entire process will be repeated. A bill which has simply failed to win a constitutional majority can be called up again for another vote. If it has been defeated by a constitutional majority, however, it cannot be considered again during that session. A bill which reaches the second house is subject to all the opportunities to succeed or fail which exist in the house of origin.

Conference Committee – If the bill passed by one chamber is then amended by the other, the amendment(s) must be agreed to by the first chamber before the legislative process can be completed. Should the first chamber dissent (refuse to give its consent), a conference committee of two members from each house is appointed to work out a version of the bill that will be satisfactory to both houses. All four members must sign the conference committee report and it must be favorably voted on in both houses. Once this has been accomplished, the bill goes to the governor for signature. However, bills sometimes die because no such agreement can be reached.

Governor’s Action – The governor sends every bill received to the attorney general for examination to see if its content is legally acceptable. The last step in the enactment process is for the governor to sign the bill or to let it become law without signature. Bills become effective on July 1 of the year they are enacted unless a different effective date is specified in the bill. The Governor also has the right to veto a bill. The veto can be overridden, but it requires a constitutional majority of both houses to do so.

Source: Indiana Chamber of Commerce,

<http://www.indianachamber.com/media/pdf/HowABillBecomesLaw08.pdf>



(The Indiana Chamber of Commerce hereby grants permission to duplicate this diagram).

Monitoring Bills

Bills can be monitored via the Indiana General Assembly's web page at www.in.gov/legislative.

You can search by bill number, legislator, committees and even by subject.

Committee schedules can be updated at any time and should be checked daily in order to stay on top of when a bill might be heard and when public testimony might be given. Often, committee hearings are streamed for live viewing online.

There is no shortcut on this step. It just takes perseverance and practice with the General Assembly's web site.

Coalitions

Finding an appropriate coalition to join can be an effective way of staying on top of legislation. Before joining a coalition, assess who the other coalition members are, what the coalition's primary objective is, and what their policy is regarding how the coalition builds consensus before issuing any public statements of its own. The LWVIN board must be approached before the LWVIN will officially join a coalition as an organization.

Some of the LWVIN's current coalition partners include:

- *Health Access & Privacy Alliance (HAPA)*
- *Indiana Coalition for Human Services*
- *Rethinking Redistricting*
- *Lake Michigan LWV (an Inter-League Organization)*

LWV NOTE

✓ Not sure how to successfully navigate a coalition relationship? Ask the LWVIN board for guidance! They can connect you to other Issue Advocates who have experience working with coalition partners.

COMMUNICATION

Understanding LWV's positions and monitoring legislation in the General Assembly is evidently very important, good communication tactics turn knowledge into action.

Issue Advocate Reports

Issue Advocates are expected to submit brief reports to the LWVIN board prior to each board meeting (as appropriate) and will receive deadline reminders. Reports need not be dense or greatly detailed; simply an overview of which bills are being monitored and where they stand in the legislative process.

Updates & Action Alerts

HOW to send: Issue Advocates, as appointed communication designees by the (co)president, are responsible for sending Updates and Action Alerts to the LWVIN board, LWV local presidents, and others. However, the (co-)presidents MUST be notified at least 24 in advance regarding the content of the proposed update and/or action alert.

WHAT to send: Updates and/or Action Alerts during the legislative session should be succinct. If asking for action, provide clear instructions on what you're asking be done and who to contact (e.g., Contact your legislator asking him/her to support SB12 *if* they are on the House Public Policy Committee). **Include the names and emails (or links to where to find contact information) of the legislators who contacted. Make action easy!**

WHO to send to: Issue Advocates should cultivate an email blast list that consists of:

- LWVIN board members
- Local LWV Presidents
- Interested LWV members*
- Community Supporters*

*Cultivating an email list should not intimidate you! Ask local LWV presidents to post a brief message from you to their members asking who wants to be on your list. When you attend statewide functions, talk to members about your work and ask them if they'd like to receive Updates and Action Alerts. Include non-LWV members who you know to be supportive of the LWV's position. At the end of session, thank everyone for their support and encourage non-members to join the LWV!

Speaking with One Voice

*Only the (co)president or his/her designee is permitted to speak for the League in any official capacity. This is how the LWV organization maintains a clear public message and presence. It is **essential** you let the (co)presidents know when you want to speak on behalf of the LWVIN.*

When asking LWV members to speak out on an issue, it is important to remind them to do so as constituents and citizens of Indiana rather than LWV members. Only the (co)president and their designee may speak for the LWV itself.

WHEN to send: A general Update at the beginning of the legislative session is a good way to activate your supporters and a summary Update at the end of the session is a good way to thank them for their commitment. Action Alerts should ONLY be sent when strategically necessary. Rallying support for or against a bill when it is originally proposed may not make sense. You need to assess the strengths of the bill, its likelihood of success in its given committee, and the overall political realities of the current session to look for the most strategic times to engage people in action. Learning when to be strategic will take time. Never hesitate to contact coalition partners or LWVIN leadership for advice.

Advocate Tip

If everything is important, nothing is important. Be judicious with your Updates and Action Alerts so as not to overwhelm your email list recipients.

LWV NOTE

Before issuing an Update or Action Alert did you . . .

- ✓Verify action is supported by an LWVIN or LWVUS position?*
- ✓Let the (co)presidents know when/why you want to issue an update or alert?*
- ✓Format your Update/Alert so that its message is concise and, if an Action Alert, has a clear action step and deadline?*

COMMUNICATION EXAMPLES

WHAT: Issue Advocate Report/Issue Update re: Reproductive Rights/HAPA Coalition*

WHEN SENT: January 2015

SENT TO: LWVIN Board, LWV Local Presidents, Interested Members, & Community Partners

SUBJECT: LWVIN – Reproduction Rights Update

The League of Women Voters, with its coalition partners in the Health Access and Privacy Alliance (HAPA), is actively monitoring several anti-abortion bills in the Indiana General Assembly. Erin Kelley, LWVIN Reproductive Rights Liaison, encourages members wishing to receive Action Alerts to contact her at erinkelley75@gmail.com.

***DOUBLE DUTY REPORTS**
If an Issue Advocate report to the board can serve as an Update to your supporters, that's fine!

SB 329 & HB 1136 – Disposition of Aborted Remains

Sponsored by Senators Brown and Banks and Representatives Judy and Cox, SB 329/HB 1136 establishes the right for a “pregnant woman who has an abortion to determine the final disposition of the aborted fetus.” According to the Division of Reproductive Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Promotion, most (64.5%) abortions are performed by 9 weeks gestation and nearly all (91%) are performed by 13 weeks. “Fetus” is a scientific term that is only appropriate beginning at the 10th week of pregnancy. These bills ignore science by redefining zygote, blastocyst, embryo and fetus; labeling them all as human remains. SB 329 and HB 1136 require abortion providers to provide confusing and unscientific information to the majority of women seeking abortions.

SB 334 & HB 1228 – Abortion Prohibition Based on Sex or Disability

SB 334 (Sen. Holdman) and HB 1228 (Rep. Wesco) are political interferences into a woman’s most personal and private medical decision. Information about the risks associated with a pregnancy should be provided without shame and without coercion to continue a potentially dangerous pregnancy to term. Regarding the prohibition against sex-selection abortions, this is a solution in search of a problem. “Replacing Myths with Facts: Sex-Selective Abortion Laws in the United States,” a report issued by the University of Chicago in 2014, documents the sex selective abortion in the U.S. is not a problem.

Action You Can Take

Be on the lookout for action alerts, especially in early to mid-February. Prior to any alerts, however, contact your legislator if they are a bill sponsor or committee chair. (Both Senate bills have been assigned to Sen. Patricia Miller’s Health & Provider Services Committee and both House bills are in Rep. Tom Dermody’s Public Policy Committee.) Encourage your legislators to drop these bills and focus on more important matters, such addressing the recent assessment by the [Indiana Institute for Working Families](#) that Indiana’s poverty rate has increased 29.3% since 2007.

WHAT: Call to Action (Public Transit Funding)

WHEN SENT: January 2012

SENT TO: LWVIN Board, LWV Local Presidents, Interested Members, & Community Partners

SUBJECT: HB 1073 – Mass Transit Plan

Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Espich has proposed HB 1073 which includes:

1. A method for the public to express their support for transit funding through a referendum;
2. Local Home Rule, the role of local government to make decisions in the best interests of the people it serves;
3. A method to partially fund mass transit through the flexibility to increase a local option income tax to become a dedicated funding source.

HB 1073 is still in the House Ways & Means Committee and has not yet been called for a vote. It will die unless called by the end of next week (Jan. 27). Please contact committee members with the message, "Dear Representative _____, I support HB 1073 and encourage you to do the same. Thank you."

Call the Statehouse switchboard at 1-800-382-9841 or email:

Chair: Representative Jeff Espich	h82@in.gov
Representative Suzanne Crouch	h78@in.gov
Representative Bob Cherry	h53@in.gov
Representative Thomas Dermody	h20@in.gov
Representative Phyllis Pond	h85@in.gov
Representative Milo Smith	h59@in.gov
Representative Jeff Thompson	h28@in.gov
Representative Jim Baird	h44@in.gov
Representative Edward Clere	h72@in.gov
Representative Mike Karickhoff	h30@in.gov
Representative Rebecca Kubacki	h22@in.gov
Representative Dan Leonard	h50@in.gov
Representative Richard McClain	h24@in.gov
Representative Randy Truitt	h26@in.gov
Representative Eric Turner	h32@in.gov
Representative Matt Ubelhor	h62@in.gov
Representative William Crawford	h98@in.gov
Representative Mara Candelaria Reardon	h12@in.gov
Representative Terry Goodin	h66@in.gov
Representative Clyde Kersey	h43@in.gov
Representative Sheila Klinker	h27@in.gov
Representative Win Moses	h81@in.gov
Representative Scott Pelath	h09@in.gov
Representative Cherrish Pryor	h94@in.gov
Representative Peggy Welch	h60@in.gov

Advocate Tip

Action Alerts (aka Calls to Action) should be:

- Concise
- Contain a clear action step
- Provide specific information on who to contact
 - At least include a "Find Your Legislator" link: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/>
- If not providing sample language, remind your supporters to be concise, respectful, and to include their home addresses, if constituents

If you are willing, please blind copy (bcc) the LWV's coalition partner, the Indiana Citizens Alliance for Transit (ICAT), at info@indianacat.org so we can count how many emails are sent to legislators.

WHAT: LWVIN/Coalition Partner Joint Statement (Natural Resources)

WHEN SENT: April 2015

SENT TO: Congressional Leaders*

**Occasionally, the LWVIN will be asked to sign a joint statement – always confirm with LWV leadership*

Dear Chairman Aderholt, Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Farr, and Ranking Member Merkley:

The undersigned organizations oppose re-opening the farm bill and thus urge you to protect farm bill conservation program mandatory funding as you consider agriculture appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2016.

Last year, the Agricultural Act of 2014 consolidated or eliminated nearly a dozen conservation programs and reduced mandatory funding by \$4 billion, with sequestration scheduled to cut an additional \$2 billion. The House and Senate Agriculture Committees did their part to reduce federal spending and did so voluntarily. The cuts contained in the new farm bill were real, serious, and deep. Under current law, new enrollments in conservation programs will decline by millions of acres in FY 2016; sequestration alone will cut \$260 million from mandatory conservation spending in FY 2016. Opening up the farm bill to reduce these programs even more should be off the table in the appropriations bill.

Yet, according to the Office of Management and Budget, the President's FY 2016 budget request proposes hundreds of millions of dollars in additional cuts to the farm bill Conservation Title. The President's request includes a 3 million acre cut to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), a 30 percent reduction below the 10 million acres mandated by the 2014 Farm Bill. The budget proposes a 23 percent cut in funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). We strongly oppose these proposed cuts and urge you to reject them or any other cuts to conservation program funding. The President's proposal is shortsighted and would severely limit the capacity of farmers, ranchers, and foresters to conserve water, maintain their soil, and produce abundant food and fiber.

Additional cuts to farm bill conservation programs would leave producers high and dry when trying to prepare for and manage drought, flooding, and other extreme weather. It would mean more water pollution and less wildlife habitat. It would drive up long-term costs for environmental mitigation, and threaten our nation's food security.

As the Subcommittees develop FY 2016 appropriations bills, we urge you to keep the farm bill intact, to reject the Administrations' irresponsible farm bill cuts, and to protect these vital programs and the public goods they support.

Sincerely,

[Lake Michigan League of Women Voters coalition partner signatures]

WHAT: Issue Advocate Report re: Indiana Coalition on Human Services
WHEN SENT: April 2015 (end of Indiana General Assembly Session)
SENT TO: LWVIN Board

The League of Women Voters is a member of the Indiana Coalition for Human Services. The ICHS is a coalition of service providers, policy advocates and professional organizations. ICHS lobbies in the State House on a range of issues covered by both LWVIN and LWVUS positions. I currently serve as the ICHS Board Secretary.

This year ICHS focused on the biennial budget. Human services have taken a hit in prior budget cycles. Surprisingly, human services are faring well to date. Although this report was prepared prior to the final budget forecast and the adoption of the State's biennial budget, ICHS suspects the budget may not be as favorable to human services as it is now. Please check the ICHS weekly newsletter for end of the session details.

The ICHS managed the Cover Indiana Campaign that focused on Medicaid expansion in Indiana. This spring the State received approval from the Secretary of Health & Human Services to expand the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) to HIP2.0.

Now more Hoosiers and their families will have access to affordable health care coverage.

Last fall, the ICHS launched the [InvestINHoosiers](#) Campaign. I was appointed manager of the Campaign. [InvestINHoosiers](#) asks the legislature to invest in families, invest in job creation, invest in the safety net and invest in education.

As the economy has improved not all Hoosiers have benefited and ICHS believes that investing in Hoosiers will pay off for the State. Go to [InvestINHoosiers.org](#) for more information.

At the end of the session, the ICHS will conduct a series of 5 or 6 regional meetings across Indiana. The meetings will provide an update of the legislative session and its effect on human services across Indiana. Please check the ICHS weekly newsletter for the dates and locations of these meetings. As a member of LWVIN you will be able to register at the ICHS member rate.

The Annual Meeting will be held in August. Stay tuned for more information.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as the LWVIN liaison to the Indiana Coalition for Human Services.

ACTION & EDUCATION

- Engage in action and education by:
 - Preparing testimony and/or Letters to the Editor
 - Meeting with legislators
 - Providing educational opportunities for members
- Participate in and/or build coalitions

Advocacy Myths:

Lobbying includes action that transmits a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs, as well as action urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation. Lobbying activities must be funded through general operating funds (501(c)4).

Advocacy activities, on the other hand, can sometimes be funded with tax-deductible monies. This is the case even when only one side of an issue is presented, as long as no call to action on a particular piece of legislation is issued. Such activities can include: (1) developing public policy briefs that analyze issues and provide detailed information and recommendations for addressing them through specific reforms and (2) providing forums for discussing issues and educating policymakers and the public.

Familiarize yourself more with the differences between lobbying and advocacy by reading this helpful LWVUS fact sheet:

<http://lww.org/files/LWVUS%20Action%20Myths.pdf>

TESTIMONY EXAMPLE – *Always confirm the content with LWVIN leadership.*



Good morning. My name is {xxxxxxx} and I am speaking today on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Indiana, which is a member of the Health Access and Privacy Alliance, in opposition to the contents of both SB 328 and 457.

The League of Women Voters of Indiana is a 91-year-old nonpartisan organization that works in the public interest. Although primarily known for its voter education and service work, the League is an advocacy organization with a strong stance related to abortion rights as guaranteed by the US Supreme Court decision of *Roe v Wade*.

The LWV believes every U.S. resident should have access to basic healthcare, including prenatal and reproductive healthcare. Furthermore, we believe government should protect the constitutional right of individuals to make reproductive choices based on their own circumstances and conscience. These individuals should also be able to make choices about their reproductive lives without fear of condemnation or intimidation on the part of the government or by medical professionals who are forced to make statements based on information the scientific community does not have consensus on.

SB 328 will effectively deny women their constitutional right to make decisions about their reproductive health and thus access to reproductive healthcare by requiring hospital privileges for abortion providers. Hospitals across Indiana have varying requirements a physician must meet in order to obtain “privileges” to practice there. Some hospitals require a set number of patients be admitted by the physician each year – given the low complication rate with abortions (approx. 3 in 1,000 cases) abortion providers would not meet this requirement. Other hospitals might require a physician to live within so many miles of the hospital so that they can be on call. Since only a few physicians perform abortions in Indiana and travel from location to location, this requirement will be impossible to meet.

Rather than increase patient safety, this bill will make it harder for women to obtain needed safe and legal abortions. We fear that women, when faced with the added burdens of finding a legal abortion provider, will turn to illegal and dangerous means. The League also sees the long term consequences this kind of legislation will have on access to other kinds of healthcare – especially as related to other medical professionals who perform outpatient procedures with higher complication rates than abortion. Though this legislation only targets abortion providers, the precedence will be set to reduce access to other medical services in the future.

As for SB 457, to assume that practicing physicians do not already provide their patients with needed information to make an informed decision for medical procedures and requiring an outside source to do so is an invasion of government into the medical community. Imposing regulations on what is shared by a physician, when the scientific community itself differs on these matters, is contrary to the position of the League of Women Voters.

In contrast the League urges you to support legislation to prevent unplanned pregnancies through funding of reproductive education to the youth of Indiana and funding to medical facilities which provide needed reproductive health care services.

Thank you for hearing the League's position on this matter.

[NAME & CONTACT INFO]

Testimony Tips

- *Professionally format your testimony, use the LWV logo, and include contact information. You might be asked to leave a copy with the committee and/or the media, if present.*
- *Open with your name and your affiliation with the League of Women Voters.*
- *Establish some context as to why the LWV is testifying on this issue.*
- *Succinctly make your case. Use facts, not emotions to guide your statement.*
- *Be respectful and deferential. Do not "preach," admonish, or insult the elected officials to whom you are testifying.*
- ***ALWAYS ask someone else in the LWVIN to proofread your testimony and send a copy to the (co) president at least 24 hours in advance.***
- *The day before AND morning of the scheduled hearing, verify the time and location.*
- *Arrive at least 30 minutes early to secure a seat.*
- *Sign in with a legislative aid.*
- *Wait patiently until your name is called.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR are another effective means of action and (community) education. Visit www.lwv.org and search "Letter to the Editor" to review a wide variety of sample and actual LTE's. If your letter is on behalf of the LWVIN, send to the (co)president for review.

Meeting with Legislators

Don't let the idea of meeting with a legislator make you nervous! The League of Women Voters is a trusted name and resource. Elected officials are typically quite receptive to hear from the LWV.

As with providing testimony, you need to be prepared.

- Schedule a meeting rather than “drop in.”
- Review LWV positions, history, etc. before your meeting.
- Establish a *reasonable* outcome for the meeting.
 - As much as we'd like to secure a vote in favor or against a particular bill that may not always be the appropriate outcome for a meeting. Sometimes just holding an elected official accountable to keeping an open mind, reviewing additional information, or agreeing to an additional meeting is a “win.” At the same time, its okay to ask a legislator where they are leaning on an issue and how the LWV might be of assistance in providing additional information for them to consider.
- Listen as well as talk. Get to know this person. Learn where their interests rests and work towards building a trusted relationship.

Providing Educational Opportunities for Members

As an Issue Advocate, you might be asked to help education LWV members by drafting an e-newsletter piece, an article for *The Voter*, or supplying useful links for the League's Facebook page. Upon occasion, you might also be asked to serve as a guest speaker by a local League or by the LWVIN for a statewide gathering. Connecting local LWV's to the legislators and/or coalition partners you have been working with so that they might serve as guest speakers at Third House Parties, luncheon series, etc. is also a way to potentially educate and engage members around an issue.

Participating/Building Coalitions

See page 10.

SERVING LOCAL LWVs

Serving as an LWVIN Issue Advocate makes you an amazing asset to not only the state organization but also to local LWVs. While local LWVs wishing to engage in advocacy should always be directed to the (Co)President and Advocacy Chair for guidance and approval on action, it's important you have some basic tools at your disposal to address their needs.

Top Ten List for Advocacy

When speaking to local LWV leaders about advocacy work, keep these Top 10 ideas in mind:

1. Understand what you are advocating for, thoroughly.
2. Research and be articulate on the finer points of your effort.
3. Know who your audience is and play to them.
4. Pick your battles, know when to fold the tent and go home.
5. Develop a plan and work the plan ... details, details, details!
6. Identify stakeholders, key spokespersons, and those affected most.
7. Make assignments. You need worker bees, speakers, organizers, and savvy tech people.
8. Be committed. Don't let anyone sway your decision once you have made it, but make it based on fact and research.
9. Work the numbers, publicly. Identify the media market and utilize it.
10. Celebrate! Advocates work hard and get hit hard, celebrate, publicly.

Guidelines for Local LWV Advocacy in the General Assembly

Under the authority of a local League position, a local LWV may wish to take action in the General Assembly on legislation. After long and careful consideration, when a local Board agrees that such action is appropriate and has skills and leadership for it, it **MUST** contact the state (Co)President as well as Advocacy Chair for clearance **BEFORE TAKING ACTION**.

To determine whether such action is appropriate, the local Board should:

1. Get a copy of the proposed legislation and review it carefully. The state Advocacy Chair may be able to help you.
2. Determine that the legislation is within the limits of the local position and does not overlap with state or national positions. The local LWV should share its information with LWVIN and ask state to take action rather than trying to do it alone.
3. Determine whether the legislation applies solely to that local LWV's community or is applicable or permissive for other similar governmental units in the state. If the latter, it is not appropriate for individual local League action.
4. Determine whether the legislation adversely affects or conflicts with positions of other Indiana local Leagues.

To conduct action, the local Board should:

1. Submit the request to the Advocacy Chair in writing (email is acceptable), explaining the legislation clearly and giving a brief description of its contents plus the local position involved. Specify the number of the bill.
2. Outline the proposed action and any other pertinent information, such as results of Board's investigations.
3. The LWVIN will notify the local Board promptly of its decision. If local League action is approved, keep the state Advocacy Chair informed of your activities. The state Board may report your action through the State Board Report.

Non-Legislative Advocacy (adapted from the LWVUS "[Streamlining Local LWV Advocacy.](#)")

LWVIN Issue Advocates can and should encourage local LWVs to engage in non-legislative advocacy. There are a variety of ways local LWV leaders can engage their members, educate their communities, and help shape public policy.

A useful first step might be to designate a local LWV (board) member as the advocacy coordinator. Among other things, this person can:

- Respond to state/national action alerts on behalf of their local League.
- Help with issuing letters-to-the editor suggestions provided by the state/national League.
- Post state/national action alerts on their local League website and social media channels.
- Monitor the LWVIN and LWVUS web sites for action opportunities.
- Let members know how officials voted on action alert legislation.
- Use templates to submit letters-to-the-editor for the LWV priority issues, and notable dates, e.g. Women's Equality Day, etc.
- Encourage and/or organize local members to write elected officials and local newspapers (as constituents) about current events and link to League positions.
- Help publicize LWV positions to the media and other organizations.

Section 8

SUMMARY OF ISSUE ADVOCATE DUTIES

- 1.) Commit to an issue to follow.
- 2.) Familiarize yourself with the appropriate LWV position and history.
- 3.) Cultivate an email distribution list.
- 4.) Join a coalition, if possible.
- 5.) Monitor legislation.
- 6.) Draft/deliver testimony, when possible.
- 7.) Provide updates, reports, and action alerts to the LWVIN board and issue supporters.
- 8.) Support local LWVs when they ask for guidance/advice.

GUIDELINES FOR ACTION BY LOCAL LEAGUES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Under the authority of a local League position, a local League may wish to take action in the General Assembly on legislation. After long and careful consideration, when a local Board agrees that such action is appropriate and has skills and leadership for it, it **MUST** contact the state League Legislative Coordinator or state President for clearance **BEFORE TAKING ACTION**.

To determine whether such action is appropriate, the local Board should:

1. Get a copy of the proposed legislation and review it carefully.
2. Determine that the legislation is within the limits of the local position and does not overlap with state or national positions.
 - a. It is important to assess whether the legislation applies solely to the local community or if it is applicable statewide/nationwide. **If the latter, it is not appropriate for individual local League action.**
3. Share information with the LWVIN and ask for support rather than trying to do it alone.
4. Determine whether the legislation adversely affects or conflicts with positions of other Indiana local Leagues.

To conduct action, the local Board should:

1. Submit the request to the LWVIN board in writing, explaining the legislation clearly and giving a brief description of its contents, plus the local position involved. Specify the number of the bill.
2. Outline the proposed action and any other pertinent information, such as results of the local LWV board's investigations.

The LWVIN will notify the local board promptly of its decision. If local League action is approved, keep the LWVIN informed of your activities. The state board may report your action to other local LWVs.

Give Me An Example

In 2013 the Indiana General Assembly was considering HB 1011—a bill that would enable Indianapolis to seek dedicated funding for public transit through a referendum. The LWV of Indianapolis has a local position in support of public transit and worked with the LWVIN to advocate on behalf of HB 1011 on its own.

