



2024

Legislative

Meet and Greet

Packet



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Introductory Letter and Messaging Guidance

January 12, 2024

Dear Local League Leaders,

As the new legislative session begins, we encourage all local leaders to hold a “meet and greet” with their legislators. This guide is designed to be a resource for you to do just this, and includes guidelines for setting up and conducting these meetings as well as information that might be useful when talking to your legislators.

The goal of this meet and greet:

There are two primary goals for these meetings: one, is to get to know the legislator, and the second is to have the legislator get to know the League and its work. These interviews:

1. allow local Leagues to build, develop, and/or maintain relationships with their legislators and to learn more about the legislators – their backgrounds, their goals and priorities, etc. Remember, good advocacy work is based on good relationships.
2. give local Leagues an opportunity to educate new legislators on issues the League cares about and to let them know our position on those issues; and,
3. provide a new legislator with resources that would be of assistance to them in their work.

The “meet and greet” is not intended to be a lobbying session per se; rather, it is to cultivate a relationship with your legislator, find out what their needs and concerns are, demonstrate the League as an active organization and let them know that the League is available to provide nonpartisan information on an issue and important feedback from key constituents.

We encourage you to refer your legislators to *Where We Stand*, the official policy position of LWVPA. *Where We Stand* is available on the LWVPA website [here](#). For the most up-to-date information on current policy positions, visit the “[Issues](#)” section of our website.

We have also included a list of priority areas at the end of this document, which you can discuss with the Legislator. Also attached is a summary sheet of issues that you can leave with the legislator. You should also feel free to discuss any local issues that are of priority to your League.



Before scheduling a meeting, you can send the legislator an introductory letter or email. See our template letter in the coming pages.

Conducting the meet and greet:

Local Leagues should schedule meetings at a time and in a manner that works best for the League representatives that will be attending.

Possible avenues for these interviews include:

- In-person meetings in Harrisburg or at a state lawmaker's district office.
- Virtual meetings. There are many online video tools that Leagues can use for free, including [Zoom](#). If you are not comfortable using these tools, legislators' staff will likely be helpful in setting up the meetings. For more technical support, contact samantha.anthony@palwv.org.

There is no one right way to hold these meeting with a legislator; the key is to hold the meeting in a format with which both you and your legislator will be comfortable, so that you will be able to dialogue with the legislator on issues that matter to them and to the League.

Scheduling the meeting:

Legislators tend to have very busy schedules, and while it is important for them to meet with constituents (you!), anything you can do to make the meeting more convenient for them will help.

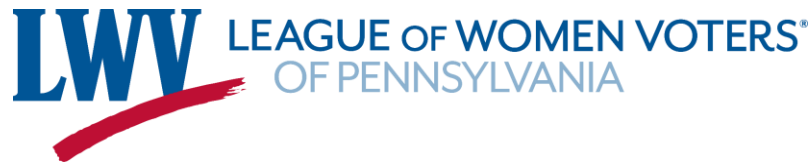
Other points to consider regarding scheduling legislative interviews include:

- Meetings should be scheduled for a time convenient to your legislator.
- While an hour meeting is ideal, let the legislator set the length with thirty minutes being the minimum.
- Prior to scheduling any meetings, you should coordinate with other Local Leagues that share your legislators. If you are unsure whether there are overlapping districts, email info@palwv.org.
- You can find contact information for your local legislators on the Pennsylvania General Assembly's website [here](#).

Tips on holding the meeting:



1. *Before the meeting:*
 - a. Decide what League materials you would like to provide to the Legislator. The League's list of policy priorities are listed in this packet. For a 30 minute meeting, we suggest 2-3 topics. We have also included several sample questions for legislators, which are purely optional and can serve as a jumping off point.
 - b. Check to see if the legislator has taken any stance on the topics you choose. If they have taken a stance the LWV agrees with, thank them for doing so, and encourage them to continue. You should still explain why you and the LWV feel they should support the topic, as that can help them defend their position or convince another legislator to join them.
 - c. Prepare to discuss your League's membership – who you are, how many, their interests and priorities, etc. You can also highlight the ongoing work to grow and expand your members to reach younger and new constituents.
 - d. Decide who among the League representatives attending the meeting will start the discussion and who will handle each topic you would like to cover. Remember that one of the main goals is to develop, build, and maintain a relationship with your legislator, so asking questions and learning more about your legislator should be a focus of your discussion.
2. *At the interview:*
 - a. Listen carefully!
 - b. Maintain nonpartisanship – you are representing the League.
 - c. Be cordial even if you disagree on an issue.
 - d. With a returning incumbent, be sure to thank them if you know they supported or sponsored bills the League has supported.
 - e. If new, congratulate the Legislator on their new position.
 - f. Ask the legislators about their own background, goals, and legislative priorities. Remember, this meeting is about building relationships.
 - g. Educate legislators about the League and invite them to attend one of your meetings, join the League, or renew membership.



- h. Be alert for signals that the meeting should be ending and do your best to end on a positive note.
3. *After the meeting:*
 - a. Send a written thank you note immediately after your meeting. If applicable, invite the lawmaker to an upcoming League event. Provide contact information for everyone who participated in the meeting.
 - b. Fill out our [Report Back Form](#) to share information about and some brief reflections on your meeting. This will help us plan future advocacy activities, like our 2024 Lobby Day.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact LWVPA with questions.

In League,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Amy Widestrom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Amy Widestrom
Executive Director



**League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania
Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.
2024 Policy One-Pager**

In the ever-evolving landscape of democratic governance, the League of Women Voters of PA remains poised to address pivotal challenges and opportunities in the year 2024. Committed to fostering a resilient and inclusive democracy, our focus revolves around critical pillars that shape the foundation of our democracy. As we navigate the complexities of this critical election year, the LWVPA will direct its attention towards key policies, encompassed broadly by election administration and funding, voting integrity, representation, social policy, and environmental sustainability. By outlining the following core areas, we aim to contribute to the advancement of a vibrant and responsive democratic system that reflects the diverse voices and concerns of our citizens. This is intended to be a summary statement of the priorities we expect to focus on at this time. However, this list is not exhaustive, and does not disallow LWVPA from taking action on other issues. These priorities are a reflection of what LWVPA expects to be a focus of our time and effort.

Election Administration and Funding

- Adequately fund, staff, and equip election offices at the state and county levels, including in the state budget to support modern operations and adequate systems to comply with requirements.
- Authorize pre-canvassing of ballots to streamline administration and reduce the number of voters who are disenfranchised due to technical errors.
- Support policies and systems to facilitate the curing of ballots which have clerical, material, or administrative errors
- Ensure officials uphold their duty to defend our democracy by honoring the will of the voters and acting to combat mis- or disinformation.

Voting

- Continue to improve access and convenience for every eligible voter, including how and when they are able to cast their ballots.
- Oppose hurdles to voting, such as unnecessarily restrictive voter ID rules and hard-to-understand absentee/mail voting rules.
- Ensure voter privacy and voter data security.
- Ensure that certification follows the process outlined by law and is not subject to interference or obstruction, including protection against recounts that undermine election integrity and disrupt election processes.



Representation

- Promote a nonpartisan redistricting process that is governed by transparency and equity to ensure that the population is fairly represented.
- Adopt a primary election system that grants equal participation to all registered voters, including unaffiliated voters.
- At the federal level, support changes to the Electoral College to give votes equal weight toward electing the President of the United States.

Social Policy

- **Healthcare:** Protect the right to make private healthcare decisions without interference from the government. In particular, support the constitutional right of privacy of individuals to make reproductive choices.
- **Education:** Ensure a quality public education system for every child in Pennsylvania, which rests on an increase of state funding for k-12 education and distributing this funding equitably.
- **Gun Safety:** Enact reasonable gun control laws, including limiting the accessibility regulating ownership of weapons by private citizens, in order to reduce the incidence of gun violence, gun accidents, and gun-assisted suicide.

Environmental Policy

- **Addressing Climate Change:** Ensure the passage of much-needed policies to reduce dependence on fossil fuels either via Pennsylvania participation in RGGI, or a reasonable alternative, to preserve environmental sustainability across the state.
- **Environmental Protection:** Protect our air, water, and land and actively work to combat the effects of climate change through legislation and policy.
- **Environmental Justice:** Ensure the meaningful involvement of all citizens in environmental policy decisions, the equitable treatment/consideration for frontline communities, and mindfulness of environmental decisions on public health.



Sample Questions for Legislative Meet and Greets

The below sample questions are purely optional and are meant to serve as a jumping off point for your meet and greet. Feel free to use these questions or edit them as you see fit.

1. What are your legislative goals and priorities for 2024? And why are these goals and priorities important to you?
2. As you know, the mission of the League of Women Voters is to empower voters and protect and promote democracy. How do you intend to help ensure that voting is convenient and accessible for every eligible voter?
3. Have you thought much about election administration? Can you speak to the importance of adequately staffed and equipped election offices? How will you work to ensure that polling locations in your constituency get the resources they need to function properly on election day? What would your top priority for this be?
4. Can you speak to your thoughts on our current primary system? How would you change it (if at all) to be more effective and representative?
5. Can you speak to your stance on the Constitutional right to privacy, especially as it impacts the healthcare choices of Pennsylvanians? How would you interpret and ensure this right?
6. What are your policy priorities with respect to the environment? What are your plans, if any, to ensure a bipartisan and stakeholder-driven process for implementing sustainable environmental policies at the legislative level?



Background Information on the League's Legislative Priorities for 2024 For Internal Use By Your League

In preparation for Local League meetings with legislators, the following background information on each priority is provided for review.

Elections and Election Administration

- The campaign for Making Democracy Work supports the improvement of elections such that voters have the access, information, and opportunity needed to make informed choices at the ballot.
- The League's position on election laws and process can be found starting on page 14 of "[Where We Stand.](#)"

Voting

- All voting priorities are aligned with LWVPA and LWVUS programs enacted at the 2022 and 2023 respective Conventions.
- Our priorities specifically align with the League-wide campaign for [Making Democracy Work](#), which states that "voting is a fundamental right and all eligible voters should have the equal opportunity to exercise that right." As such, the League is dedicated to ensuring that our elections remain free, fair and accessible.
- Our full position on voting laws and access can be found on pages 14 - 18 of "[Where We Stand.](#)"
- LWVPA engaged in several pieces of litigation regarding voter protection this year, including a [federal case regarding](#) the counting of undated mail in ballots.

Defending Democracy

- The League has long held positions advocating for a fair redistricting process which accurately represents voters. For the full position and background, please refer to page 38 of "[Impact on Issues](#)" or page 14 of "[Where We Stand.](#)"
- The League's position on open primaries can be found on page 17 of "[Where We Stand.](#)" The League will continue to advocate for an open primary system in the next biennium
- At its 2022 Convention, LWVUS announced a new "moonshot goal" of abolishing the electoral college. As such, LWVPA is committed to furthering this advocacy at the state level.
- The League's position on legislative rules reform and its suggested changes to the Rules of Procedure can be found on page 23 of "[Where We Stand.](#)" In addition, the Fix Harrisburg Campaign, run by Fair Districts PA, advocates for [bipartisan rules reform](#) which guarantees more votes for strong bills.

Education



- The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania supports an equitable system of school funding which benefits all Pennsylvania children and families.
- Our position and background on education can be found on page 132 of "[Impact on Issues](#)."

Gun Safety

- The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the proliferation of handguns and semiautomatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety. LWVPA is currently working on a proposed position regarding gun safety, which includes extreme risk protection orders, lost or stolen firearm reporting, and background checks.
- LWVPA works with Ceasefire PA to [advocate for the passage](#) of common sense gun safety bills.
- Our stance on gun policy can be found on page 153 of "[Impact on Issues](#)."

Healthcare

- LWVPA believes in the Constitutional right of privacy as it applies to healthcare decisions. A full background and position statement can be found on page 57 of "[Impact on Issues](#)."

Environment

- The League's full stance on environmental protection can be found on page 96 of "[Impact on Issues](#)." The League's environmental protection and anti-pollution goals aim to prevent ecological degradation and to reduce and control pollutants before they go down the sewer, up the chimney, or into the landfill.
- The League belongs to the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI) coalition. We support the entry of Pennsylvania into the RGGI auction program. This is a proven method for reducing greenhouse gasses and preventing climate change. [We support](#) Governor Shapiro's decision to appeal the Commonwealth Court's decision that PA should not participate in RGGI.
- LWVPA *Environmental Justice Statement*: [Environmental justice](#) upholds the principle that communities should not be disproportionately exposed to adverse environmental/health impacts or receive an inevitably low share of environmental benefits. Historically, low-income, culturally diverse black/brown populations have suffered. The League advocates for the meaningful involvement of all citizens in policy decisions, the equitable treatment/consideration for front line communities and mindfulness of environmental decisions on public health. Environmental justice ensures that everyone has an equal seat at the table.



Sample Introductory Letter or Email for Legislators

(Logo above can be updated to your League's logo)

LEAGUE NAME + ADDRESS

DATE

Dear Representative (Senator) XXXXX:

I hope this letter finds you well. I'm reaching out on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania to connect ahead of what will be a busy legislative season. The members of the League are eager to work with you and other legislators to support and uplift the needs of Pennsylvanians. We believe we have many areas of common interest and can learn from each other about how best to address the concerns of voters.

The League has a long history of defending democracy and empowering voters by ensuring that they have accurate, nonpartisan, and unbiased information about issues, voting, and elections. We believe legislators are also interested in providing constituents with similar information. With that in mind, local League members who are your constituents will be contacting you in the near future to arrange a meeting to discuss how we all can work together moving forward.

We have taken the liberty of enclosing the attached document, which lists 2024 priorities of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania. We hope you find it useful as you consider issues during the upcoming legislative term.

Sincerely,

League leaders' names