

INSTRUCTIONS: STUDY LEADERS AND LOCAL BOARDS

Study Leaders (2 or 3 members) First Steps:

Review the Leaders' Packet: *Introduction, Instructions to Study Leaders, Consensus Questions Worksheets for Leaders*. Then download the complete packet with Briefing Papers (BPs) and *Consensus Questions Worksheet for Members*.

- Decide how best to present the study materials to your League
 - a) Division of topics and division reading may be needed. See below.
 - b) Plan meetings. A panel is usually better than a single leader.
- Recruit 1-2 recorders for the meetings. Tape the meeting for backup.
- Decide how to distribute the material to members (**in sections as relevant, not all at once**).
 - a) Jean Johnson can offer technical advice for helping your members access the complete study packet posted on state web site or advise leaders about sending small portions of the packet by email attachments, as meetings are announced. jjohnson@lwval.org or 205-870-3063. See *The Study on Line* below.
 - b) Plan for members who are not On-Line but may have valuable contributions: They may rely on friends or get hard copies from designated Leader, if needed.
 - c) Plan for members who cannot attend meetings to participate by mailing in a *Members' Consensus Questions Worksheet*.

THE STUDY ON-LINE

Study Leaders and Boards can access all Study information, including leadership materials, at <http://www.lwval.org/legstudy/leaders/>. Type **leader** as the Username and **leader** as the password. (Please don't give out the Study Leaders' password to the general membership.)

Other League Members should be instructed to access Study information at <http://www.lwval.org/legstudy/members/>. Type **lwval** as the Username and **alconref** (stands for Alabama Constitutional Reform) as the Password. If you have any problem with access, notify Jean Johnson, jjohnson@lwval.org or 205 870-3063.

(Hint: Saving files to your computer prevents having to go on-line repeatedly.)

MANAGING THE VOLUME OF MATERIAL

The size of the study packet is dictated by the need to present complex topics with sufficient explanations for informed member decisions. The BPs should be kept as a major Local League resource for future activities. The aim is to inform as many members as you can as fully as you can.

- The deadline for reporting Local League Consensus to LWVAL has been extended to **April 1, 2006**
- Do not distribute the whole packet at once, unless specifically requested.
 - a) A first distribution to prepare for the study might include: *Introduction, Instructions for Members* and perhaps, *Legislative Basics*.
 - b) Send the *Members' CQs* and the BPs relevant to each meeting in time for members to study and mark their Worksheets.

- All members should be told how to access the complete study on the LWVAL web site. Browsing through the BPs, which are interconnected, is educational.
- At least **two meetings** will be needed. You should divide the five CQ topics between the two meetings. (The traditional League method--instructing in one meeting and seeking consensus in a later one after members have reflected--will not work in this case. The Members' Worksheet promotes reflection before the discussion.) The Consensus Questions should be decided while the discussion is fresh.

Suggested division:

- 1) The *Committee System* and *Legislative Support: Research and Staffing* (I,II), the most substantive, cannot be separated.
- 2) *Lobbying* and *Access* (III, IV); related issues best understood after the committee system is explained.
- 3) The question on Leadership (V) in *Legislative Basics*: can be placed at the end of meeting 1 or in meeting 2. .
- 4) Those topics without CQs attached (*Budget, Local Legislation, Parties and Caucuses*) may be adjusted to your League's interests and needs.
- 5) If your League has no issues with Local Legislation, you might decide to limit attention to that. These BPs do provide greater understanding of the Legislature and its operations; therefore study leaders will want to be familiar with their content.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDY LEADERS

- Preparing for the meeting: Go through the five sections of the Worksheet one at a time. For each, read the relevant BP, highlighting or listing pros and cons for the questions to be asked. Identify points in background information and explanations that may need to be explained to your members. Expect members to raise additional pros and cons; the recorder should note these those for the report.
- Guidelines for leading the meetings: Present pros and cons objectively. Give all views a hearing, within reasonable time limits. Be careful not to impose the choices you favor on the membership. Keep focused on the policy issue at hand. Avoid partisan discussion or discussion of personalities.
- The structure of the meetings: Focus on the CQs on the Worksheet. They are designed to promote specific analysis. Then take two steps:
 - 1) As members discuss the questions, establish which answer best reflects your members' views, the sense of your meeting. You might ask, "Do we agree or strongly agree on this?" The recorder and perhaps other designated members should mark a Leaders' Worksheet for each question. Having several such worksheets to compare might be useful in writing the Report.
 - 2) At the end of each section of questions on the Worksheet, ask the General question(s). The recorder should make notes on the responses. These answers may be as short as a phrase summarizing what seems the common view ("We seem to agree that Y should be improved") with opportunity for affirmation or denial. If significant dissent from the general view arises, that should be noted, E.g., "A few members thought X was more important because _____."

- Meet soon after the meetings, both leaders and recorders, to prepare the Consensus Report to submit to the Local Board. ***Worksheets from members participating by mail should be considered at this time and weighed into the view of whether consensus exists.***
- The *CONSENSUS REPORT TO LWVAL* will take the form of the *STUDY LEADERS' WORKSHEET*. It will include: 1) the groups' consensus answer to the specific questions using the scale of five answers. 2) a concise report of the group's consensus on the General Questions, and 3) Additional Comments to record any strong points of agreement not already covered, including any strong opinions shared by your members that the Consensus Questions might seem to exclude.
- Supply the Report to the Local Board for its approval or modification.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL BOARDS

- Distribute the study materials to members, pick Study Leaders, and set the consensus meeting dates(s) with an April 1 deadline in mind. Set the date for those who will mail-in Worksheets (probably the date of the last meeting). Also set the deadline for the Study Leaders to get their report to your Board for its meeting on the Consensus.
- Attend the consensus meetings so that each Board member can evaluate the events. The Board's duty is not to decide its League's positions but to evaluate the degree to which the League reached a consensus. If Board members have not attended the meetings, they should probably refrain from voting on the report.
- Meet when the Study Leaders have a Consensus Report completed. Decide to what extent Consensus has been reached. Approve or modify the Report, if needed, to ensure that it accurately conveys the level of consensus and the areas of agreement and disagreement among the members.
- The Local League President should send the Consensus Report with the signed cover sheet to the LWVAL Study Chair **to arrive by April 1, 2006.**

Ruth Wright, Chair Legislative Study
125 Cary Drive, Auburn 36830
ruthwright@mindspring.com

Answers to questions and advice on study content are available from the LWVAL study committee through the chair, **Ruth L. Wright 334-821-8617,**

ruthwright@mindspring.com (lower case L)

From October 4-October 22 questions and advice will be handled by

Anne Permaloff at 334-270-0539 (home,voice mail)

grafon_mtg@bellsouth.net (Underline mark after grafon) or
apermal@mail.aum.edu

Help with technical/ electronic matters is available from LWVAL Technical Director,

Jean Johnson 205 870-3063

jjohnson@lwval.org