

PROGRAM PLANNING: 2026/2027

Every year, members of the League of Women Voters of Lane County meet to determine what *local/state/national issues* we want to examine during the next program year. We also revisit state or national positions, biennially in turn, and provide feedback up the chain.

In January 2026, we will meet in units to look at local positions. These discussions also will offer a chance to submit proposals for informational studies for the 2026-2027 year. Such studies would be included as *Unit Discussion Material* provided with the *Argus*.

As League members, we are deliberate. We promote informed civic participation, including voting, and help shape public policy at the local, state, and national levels. Our testimony, actions and campaigns are based on League principles and League positions formed through studies and member consensus. We take the time to examine issues, conduct research, talk with community members and subject-matter experts, and discuss questions and findings among League members. We work together and speak with one voice.

One task for the January meetings is to determine whether we should retain existing positions, update information about them while leaving core positions in place, restudy a position in light of new circumstances, drop positions that are no longer relevant, or create a new position. Because we pursue advocacy on adopted positions, we follow a rigorous process before updating or forming any new position.

Durable and flexible positions are critical. They must be specific enough to offer real guidance while remaining relevant rather than preserved in amber, useful rather than overly restrictive. And, though our positions may emerge from particular issues, they ideally will accommodate changing circumstances.

There can be occasional gaps—we can't predict the future—and that may be when League members want to recommend dropping or revising a position or even adopting a new position.

Recall Elections in Oregon: example of a gap that led to a study & new position

The League of Women Voters of Oregon Board adopted a new position on recall elections in February 2025. Members at the statewide convention in May 2025 affirmed that action. Here's how we got there:

In 2022, community members contacted representatives with the League of Women Voters of Lane County for guidance on a local recall effort underway. LWVLC understood that taking a position, pro or con, on recalling a particular officeholder could conflict with the League's role as a nonpartisan organization that neither supports nor opposes candidates and political parties.

League positions—local, state, and national—also didn't tell us much when it came to recalls. The most recent study leading to the LWVOR position on Initiative, Referendum, and Recall had been adopted in 1988, with revisions in 1996 and an educational update in 2001. That work didn't actually look at recall itself, instead examined the referendum and initiative processes. In

plain language, the position stated: “The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports the recall process as provided in the Oregon Constitution.”

With efforts in Lane County and across the state renewing attention on the use of recall, LWVLC members agreed a study was in order. Who is subject to recall? How do recalls work? What laws and procedures guide this type of election? How well do these efforts engage and inform voters for fair, accessible elections?

The October 2022 *Argus* included an article explaining recall elections in Oregon. Then, in December 2022, a follow-up article in the *Argus* focused on Program Planning, with units scheduled to meet on that topic in January 2023. The December article outlined the process that could lead to a new, more detailed state position on recall. It was a call to Lane County members to say “yes” to advancing a study proposal to the LWVOR Board.

Lane County members in fact approved the proposal, and the state board in turn recommended the study in the Program put in front of delegates at the May 2023 LWVOR Convention. In the months before that May convention, LWVLC members contacted local Leagues around the state to share information on the study proposal.

After convention delegates okayed the recall study in May 2023, three LWVLC members (Rhonda Livesay, Linda Lynch, Keli Osborn) formed a study committee nucleus and began seeking members from elsewhere. They were joined for the team’s duration by Alice LaViolette, LWV Marion and Polk counties. A number of League members around the state also stepped up to participate as interviewers who met with local elections officials.

The LWVOR Recall Study Committee met for the first time via Zoom on June 30, 2023-nearly a year after community members first contacted LWVLC representatives about a local recall effort.

The study team spent many months on interviews and research digging into historical documents; League of Women Voters materials across the country; legal and civic articles, books and websites; and constitutions, laws and administrative procedures in Oregon and other states. They then had a report to write. They also had to identify subject-matter experts to look at their work and offer feedback (which they did!), make regular updates to the state board, and try to keep local Leagues in the loop.

The study team also recruited an Editing Committee (thank you to Merle Bottge, Rebecca Gladstone and others) and an Agreement Committee to review responses to Consensus Questions as part of the collaborative League process to consider a new (or revised) position.

They turned over the draft study for LWVOR Board approval in July 2024 - 13 months after our first meeting.

In the months that followed, members statewide read the study and participated in Consensus discussions.

[Note: Consensus is a process by which members discuss the findings of a completed study and answer questions developed by the study committee. Consensus reached by members through group discussion is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall “sense of the group” expressed by exchanging ideas and opinions in a (membership) meeting. Another process is Concurrence, an alternative method for a league to adopt a position. In this case, a league in one state can adopt a position from another state or local league, provided that the exact wording is used and it receives approval from their state board.]

An Agreement Committee then met in early 2025 to examine feedback before forming a recommended position for board consideration. Board action occurred in February 2025.

Arriving at a sturdy study and new position on recall required more than two years of extensive work by many League members, review by elections officials and other subject-matter experts, and careful attention to League processes that help assure internal consensus—and the League’s reliability and credibility in advocacy.

What began as a question to LWVLC representatives from community members about one particular recall election led to a different set of questions. The first “yes” from LWVLC members led to looking for answers. Diligently, patiently, collaboratively.

By the way, here’s the LWVOR position on the recall election:

Recall Elections - Adopted February 2025

1. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that local and county elections operations must have adequate funding and staffing levels sufficient to meet public needs and provide for strong, ongoing voter education.
2. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes all elected officials should be subject to recall, but not during their first six months in office.
3. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that persons seeking the recall of a public official should state the reasons and specify grounds including malfeasance (acting unlawfully while performing duties), nonfeasance (failure to perform duties), serious crimes, lack of fitness, corruption, or incompetence. The grounds on which an elected official may be recalled should be described in Oregon statute.
4. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes an adequate recall election schedule should provide time for voter education and full participation in the election. The timeline should:
 - a. Allow elections officials to provide ballots to overseas and uniformed-service members at least 45 days before an election.
 - b. Allow new voters adequate time to be notified of their requirement to register before an election in which they wish to cast ballots.
 - c. Allow time for elections officials, advocates, and civic organizations to engage prospective voters.
 - d. Allow no more than 90 days to obtain signatures on a recall petition.

5. To ensure adequate time for elections officials and staff to oversee signature verification and prepare ballots, and to contain elections-related costs, the League of Women Voters of Oregon supports restricting recall elections to one of the four election dates identified in Oregon law.

6. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that recall petitions should provide detailed information about how seats vacated by a successful recall are to be filled after the election. This information should be provided by elections staff. Seats should be vacated for the shortest time practical, with a scheduled election allowing voters to choose their public official. The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports filling vacated positions by interim appointment rather than through simultaneous election in which the proposed recall of a public official appears on the ballot alongside candidates competing simultaneously for that very office.

7. The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that recall petition circulators should be required to be Oregon residents and that these circulators should wear visible identification indicating whether they are paid or volunteers.

8. The League of Women Voters supports disclosure of the sources and amounts of campaign-related funding for recall proponents and opponents, with such disclosure beginning early and occurring regularly and in a timely way, so that voters can learn about groups involved as petitions circulate.

In January 2026, when discussing program, members consider existing positions and whether to retain, drop, update or restudy them. These definitions may help:

RETAIN -- Keep position as is, no change.

DROP -- Remove position from our list. Discontinue further advocacy. (A new study would be needed to incorporate into the program in the future.)

UPDATE -- Study the position topic for informational purposes only, with no intention of modifying the position. The objective is to update knowledge.

RESTUDY -- Review a position in order to potentially change it.

When proposing a study aimed at leading to a new, or revised position, consider the following:

1. Existing Coverage: If the issue is already addressed in LWVUS or LWVOR positions, is it necessary to conduct this study at the Lane County level?

2. Local Positions: If the issue is already covered by an LWVLC position, does it warrant another study?

3. Alignment with Principles: Does the issue align with LWV principles?

Also in January, members have the opportunity to suggest topics for informational studies to be conducted during the **2026/2027** program year.

Many of our studies are small in scale, designed to spark discussion in unit meetings and enrich the knowledge of members and other readers. So far this year, we have presented studies on

mis/disinformation and artificial intelligence with rural issues slated for March and health care for May. In April LWVOR is sending to local Leagues the first of three education studies for consensus.

When proposing an informational study, members should plan to provide both the TITLE and SCOPE: a descriptive label, the intended limits, and the direction of the study.

Keep in mind what issues are most critical and engaging for members and prospective members. Why should we focus time and resources on this study or project? Do we have capacity? Would the study help us connect with people and groups in ways that deepen our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion? Would the study increase our understanding of an issue and improve our advocacy efforts? Could it aid our visibility and credibility?

Please join us in January at a unit meeting to make your voice heard!

(Materials prepared by Keli Osborn and Sharon Amasha, proofread by Merle Bottge)

Resources

- <https://lwvlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/argus-october-2022.pdf>
RECALL OVERVIEW, LWVLC Argus, October 2022

<https://lwvlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/argus-december-2022-1.pdf>
A PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAM PLANNING UNITS, LWVLC Argus, December 2022

- *National/LWVUS*

Impact on Issues: A Guide to Public Policy Positions of the League of Women Voters, 2024-2026

https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ImpactOnIssues_2024-FINAL-DIGITAL.pdf

**See Principles, page 11, Positions, beginning page 12.

Oregon

LWVOR Policy and Position Statements

<https://www.lwvor.org/position-index>

Lane County

Issues for Action, League of Women Voters of Lane County, 2025

https://lwvlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/2025_09_09-issues-for-action.pdf

Previous Program Planning EMMs for LWVLC, and Program Planning explanations from LWVOR and LWVUS—thank you, all, for lending language here.