

April 21, 1988

**LWV**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Diane Sheridan, President  
League of Women Voters of Texas  
[REDACTED]

Dear Diane,

You requested the statement I made at Council on Sunday concerning local action on state and national positions.

"From the January, '88 National Presidents Mailing comes this statement: 'With the exception of a few selected activities to be determined by the National Board, local and state Leagues should not take action on any other issues at the national level'". This means a whole range of issues are dead in the water for local Leagues. We are not free to contact our own state and national legislators about current legislation or issues even though they are covered by present positions.

The League recognizes that targeted, priority action is needed and effective and, in some cases, must be continued over a period of years. We respond to Action Alerts.

This is an unfortunate example of drawing the reins of power into the hands of a smaller group of people, the ever-present threat to a free and thinking society. Our power and control comes from the POSITIONS which have resulted from study and consensus at the grass roots level, not from organizational super structures.

We value our State and National League organizations. They are important, hard working partners in all our efforts. We would not deny them the freedom to speak. Local Leagues also should have the privilege of speaking to positions, local, state and national. Our POSITIONS assures that we speak with one voice."

Diane, due to time limitations, I did not address other aspects of this issue, but thought has been given to them. Yes, occasionally there will be abuses. There are abuses now. However when clearly stated in By Laws (local, state and national) and/or Policy, I believe local Leagues will be responsible in their action.

Yes, one Leagues voice has less impact on legislators, but it may not be just ONE League and that will give a stronger

Fyl  
To: Board  
From: Diane  
I asked Frances to  
share her "I Wish  
the League Would" in  
writing so that we  
did not lose any of it.



response than even the programed, unified response. (I believe that happened with the Child Care legislation.)

League members respond to other public stimulus, not just those priority action issues established at Convention every two years. Are State and National so inflexible that local Leagues CANNOT respond to other issues which may come to prominence in the interim, especially when this is a stated right of State and National?

Yes, study of proposed legislation would be mandatory and it is expensive to keep staff for that purpose. However, we know that there are local League members or Friends who could be called upon, much as is being done now in program review. We have attorney members and friends who, I believe, would do a good job with such an assignment. A Corps of "Legislative Review Advisors" could prove to be useful for more than one reason. (Finance prospects if not members, strengthened public confidence in the Leagues image of "study before action", broadened public awareness of the League.)

Yes, a policy of required contacting of State and National would be needed, first, to be sure that the proposed action was covered by present positions, second, providing an opportunity for networking between Leagues with interest in action dealing with the same legislation or issues.

No doubt there are other points of consideration. State and National and Convention delegates would continue to set action priorities and they should continue to have top priority with local Leagues as is now being done. Added flexibility for local response to areas of particular interest and the sense of "co-ownership" of positions would make for better local/state/national League relations.

Thank you for hearing me out.

Council was a successful, useful and fun experience. THANKS to all who helped to make it so.

Yours very truly,

*Frances*

Frances Hardison Nichols





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

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April 12, 1988

LWV-Texas Board  
League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe, #107  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Board Members,

Once again the Tarrant County League looks to you for direction. This time our request concerns action involving two or more leagues at the local and state levels. The Leagues involved are ours and the Arlington League. The action involves a proposed landfill expansion by the City of Fort Worth.

History

The City of Fort Worth is seeking permission from the Texas Department of Health to expand a 195 acre sanitary landfill to 297 acres. The expansion will include several improvements which will increase the disposal capacity and add an estimated 13 years to the life of the site. The site of the landfill is located near Village Creek which empties into Lake Arlington. The proposed expansion is in a direction away from the creek. Engineering studies have been completed by Freese & Nichols, Consulting Engineers, but construction is not expected to commence before 2000 when the present landfill reaches disposal capacity.

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In February of this year Mary Ann Moxon, Arlington League President, and Kay Taebel, Action Chair, contacted the Tarrant County League and asked us to support the Arlington League in its attempts to stop expansion of the landfill because of danger to the water in Lake Arlington. There was not time to study the issue before the Arlington League made a presentation before its own city council, and our local President could not enter into the action efforts because of a conflict of interest. We told the Arlington League that we would address the problem at our next board meeting in March.

And  
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Before we were able to meet the enclosed letter appeared in our local newspaper. We invited a project engineer from Freese and Nichols to attend our March board meeting and brief us on the landfill proposal and answer the questions raised by the Arlington League. The engineer provided us with valuable information, albeit understandably biased toward the city's viewpoint. He answered the question of endangerment to Arlington's drinking water by explaining that there was more danger to the water quality if the present site was allowed to continue without the planned improvements. The improvements also included an increase in the

why



*how?*  
*what plans?*  
monitoring and enforcement of regulations prohibiting dumping of hazardous wastes.

The permit request for the landfill expansion was scheduled for hearing before the Dept. Of Health in March. Apparently with the State Board's permission Arlington planned to speak against issuance using State and National League natural resources positions. Again, we were not ready to take a stand either way on this issue. The hearing has been postponed until May, giving us time to try to resolve this matter before either League violates the proposed Policy Guide of the State League, a policy with which we concur.

Problem *draft*

According to the Policy Guide for Action Involving Two or More Leagues:

"... a local League may act only with the agreement of other local Leagues in the district."

We did not agree to action on this issue which involved both Leagues. Arlington took action by speaking to the Arlington City Council and by allowing the Letter to the editor to be published. *OK - not so*

The Policy Guide sets out a format for working out conflicts between Leagues, but cautions:

"If the conflict is still unresolved, local Leagues are to refrain from taking unilateral action that would create an atmosphere of mistrust among neighboring Leagues."

We do not suggest that there is an "atmosphere of mistrust" between our Leagues. We are very open to discussion, study and concurrence on a position that will warrant the support of both Leagues, and thereby present a strong statement to the community on the issue. We would like to share the information we have gathered about the proposed landfill, and we would like to hear the information that the Arlington League has gathered through its study.

Questions

Has either League violated the Policy Guide, as proposed, thus far?

Is it too late to regroup and study this issue to reach a local consensus-*no need - just agreement to discuss* concurrence?

Do we need to submit the matter to a State Board member as arbiter? *not so*

May either League take action before the Dept. Of Health hearing in May? *OK*

We look forward to receiving your answers to these questions - let's find a time to discuss the matter at Council.

Sincerely yours,

*Reed 2 - J*  
Reed K. Bilz

President-Elect and Action Chair

enclosure

*Understand hearing process  
length  
and  
standing  
KSP*



## League Opposes Landfill Expansion

F W News Trib

To The News-Tribune:

Feb 29, 1988

The League of Women Voters has been concerned about the depletion and conservation of natural resources since the 1920s and has built a sequence of national positions on water, air, waste management, land use and energy.

Specific criteria for hazardous and radioactive waste includes that such wastes should be located away from areas of critical concern such as drinking water supply sources and shorelines of lakes and rivers.

Please note the clear call to place hazardous waste disposal facilities away from exactly the kind of land and water areas which are involved in the area which the City of Fort Worth wishes to expand as its Southeast Landfill.

In reaction to the plans of the City of Fort Worth, the Arlington League of Women Voters urges the City of Arlington to oppose any permit for either the expansion or new waste treatment facilities at the Fort Worth Southeast Landfill site unless and until appropriate governmental bodies can give absolute assurances that the ground water which feeds from this location into Lake Arlington will not be endangered.

MARY ANN MOXON

President, Arlington League of Women Voters





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

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April 12, 1988

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League of Women Voters of Texas  
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Is it too late to regroup and study this issue to reach a local consensus-concurrence? *no need - just*

Do we need to submit the matter to a State Board member as arbiter? *if it comes to that*

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Sincerely yours,

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President-Elect and Action Chair

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*FW News Tribune*

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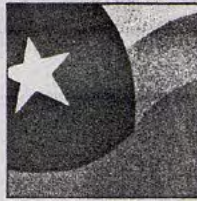
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MARY ANN MOXON

President, Arlington League of Women Voters





cc: board

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe, #107 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 512/472-1100

March 21, 1988

Frances Hardison Nichols, President  
League of Women Voters of Tarrant County

Dear Frances:

Thank you again for your hospitality Thursday! I enjoyed having the time to talk both socially and about your concerns about the state and national League.

Despite the fact that we discussed some of the following matters when we talked on March 17, I would like to reply to your March 10 letter, which I had not received at the time that we talked, because it asks about some specific items that I did not address in detail. I hope you will bear with me as I reply because the answers are not brief. I hope, however, that they will clarify some issues that are certainly of importance to all of us.

In reading your letters to Nancy Neuman and to me, I see two items that need clarification: the state board's authorization to act on program, and the process the state board uses to determine when to act. Obviously they are related, but I would like first to explain the state board's authorization to carry out League program.

#### State Board Authorization to Take Action

The LWV-Texas bylaws give the state board responsibility for determining when and how to carry out action under state positions and national League positions applicable to the state level. The bylaws also clarify what is meant by League program.

Article V, Section 4 "...The board shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program on state governmental matters as adopted by the convention."

This section of the bylaws authorizes the state board to do what is necessary to carry out study and action on matters that can be addressed by state government and on which we have positions. This section allows us, for example, to set legislative priorities, to determine when we should take action on a position, and to direct how local Leagues shall do so when the action is before a state governmental body.

The bylaws refer to program adopted by Convention because that is when program is usually adopted, unless an emergency exists. The bylaws also authorize council delegates to add



to the program in the event of an emergency. Program adopted by a council would fall under the same rules.

Program adopted at convention consists of new studies and action positions on existing items.

Article VI, Section 1(b) "The board of directors shall recommend to the national board that the national board recognize as a local League any group of members of the League of Women Voters of the United States in any community within the state, provided the group meets recognition standards for local Leagues as adopted by the national convention."

Enclosed is a copy of the latest version of measurable and enforceable requirements, the current ones having been adopted by delegates to LWVUS Convention '86. Of course, it has been many years since your League was formed and first sought recognition by demonstrating your ability to meet these standards, your ability to function as a League. All Leagues must continue to meet these requirements in order to maintain recognition. The last requirement, relating to advocacy, does not clarify what you asked in your letter, but I include it to show that part of what a new League must do is to learn how to meet these standards, including the one relating to consistency.

One of the responsibilities of the state and national boards is to provide local Leagues with information about the requirements and how to implement them. Thus we have state League publications like Choosing and Developing Local League Program; Ten Steps to Reaching Member Agreement Successfully; and Program Perspectives. Both boards have tried to recognize the quick turnover that now is typical on many local League boards and provide clear explanations of things we used to assume everyone remembered, such as the fact that consensus is not a vote. Because we are stating those things more clearly of late, they may seem like new policies even when they are not.

Article VIII, Section 5 "The convention shall consider and authorize for action a program, shall elect officers..."

This section, to which you referred in your letter, refers in general to the actions that may be taken by Convention: authorizing a program, electing officers, adopting a budget --not to action meaning lobbying. Authorizing a program means adopting a program of study and action for the following biennium as described in Article XI, which describes the program planning and adoption process.

Article XI Section 4 discusses member action and states: "...Local Leagues may act only in conformity with, and not contrary to, a position taken by the League of Women Voters of Texas and/or the League of Women Voters of the United States."



This section refers not only to positions that the League has but also to positions that the League takes to implement the positions we have. In order for a local League to act in conformity with a position the state League takes, the state League must take a position on a particular piece of legislation and that position on the bill must be based on a League position. (Frankly, it would be better if the terminology were different.)

The responsibility for determining when and how to take action based on League positions has always rested with the board at the appropriate level, namely the level of government before which action needs to be taken. The reason is that the board at the corresponding level of League not only must know which positions are applicable but also must know the governmental entities and the other players involved in any lobbying effort at that level of government. These powers are intrinsically tied to the fact that the League is structured on three levels, like the government.

Local Leagues can use local and applicable state and national positions to lobby local governments without clearance from the state or national board because your bylaws give you the authorization to do so. And you can and/or should respond without clearance to state and national League requests to act, like Action Alerts and What You Can Do, something that your League does in an exemplary fashion. If one of your members, on the other hand, wanted to lobby your local government in the name of the League, he or she could not do so without clearance from your board.

The state League can use state and applicable national positions to lobby state government without clearance from the national board because our bylaws give us authorization to do so. If one of our local Leagues wants to lobby the state government, that League cannot do so without clearance from the state board. The process of taking action at the state level is summarized in Taking Action, which can be found both in the State League Directory, LWV-Texas Policy Guide and Program Perspectives. Both publications were revised for this biennium and the current versions mailed to local Leagues last fall.

One type of lobbying often causes confusion, and that is when a local League lobbies before a state legislative committee. Many interim committees hold hearings around the state. If the committee is addressing a priority issue, the state League will testify at one of the hearings. But we like local Leagues to testify in their towns also, based on state League positions and using local information to show why the desired change would help citizens in that town. Since local positions address items that can be addressed by local government and since such positions have not been reached as the result of member agreement statewide, it is not possible to lobby for a local position before a legislative committee except in rare instances when desired legislation would affect only that city. The procedure to follow in this case is for the local League to call the LWV-T program director who holds the portfolio on that issue to obtain clearance to testify.



I have considered Reed Bilz's question as to whether there is a way for local Leagues to appeal a decision of the state board, specifically the state board's decision that we have no position from which to take action on decriminalization of homosexuality.

If local Leagues do not agree with a state League action, I believe there are basically three things they can do. First, the local League can object by formally notifying the state board and asking that the decision be reconsidered. If the board upholds its original decision, the next step would be to take the question to the next Council or Convention. In essence, that is what Phyllis Frye did when she moved an action motion at Convention directing the state board to work to repeal Section 21.06 of the Penal Code. The Action Motion Committee did not recommend the motion because there is no League position from which to act. Delegates voted, and the motion failed. The third step that a local League can take to appeal a board decision they do not like is, of course, to get rid of the board that made the decision at the next opportunity they have to do so. The nominating committee will be meeting at Council and seeking input from both local Leagues and individuals should you wish to take your concerns to them. I did not interpret our conversation as meaning that you wanted to do this, but I do want you to recognize that it is an option.

#### The Process the State Board Uses to Determine When to Take Action

The LWV-Texas Policy Guide contains legislative policy for state board members and associate program directors, but it does not explain exactly how the board decides to take action. (The State Board Handbook contains more detail.) I will try to address a few of the items that may be of interest.

The state League chooses legislative priorities because neither we nor the local Leagues who respond to our requests for help are "staffed" and budgeted to handle as many issues as we have positions to address. In the last ten years at least, there has been an effort to single out no more than six legislative priorities per session (three or four are preferable), but the number varies depending on what we think we can accomplish.

Local Leagues can suggest legislative priorities for the board to consider by contacting the board at any time. Calling or writing the program director for the issue of concern or contacting the legislative director or program vice-president work best. Individuals who want an item to be a priority should first seek the support of their local League. While local Leagues are set up to respond to such requests from individuals, the state League is set up to respond to requests from local Leagues. An exception to this occurs during the "I Wish the League Would..." session of Council, when local Leagues or individual delegates can make suggestions for the state board to consider when choosing priorities.

Priorities are finalized the September before a legislative session in order to allow time to produce advocacy papers and a priority brochure and get them to legislators after the election but before the session



starts. A fall consensus deadline for a study means that the final list may not be approved until the November board meeting when it can be determined whether member agreement has been reached on the new study.

~~When we choose priorities, we choose issues where we think we have a~~ chance of success, where our being there is important to an issue, and where we anticipate the member interest and support that is vital to back up the lobbying done by a program director. For each priority, we must also have a program director on- or off-board with the expertise, time, and energy needed to do the actual lobbying.

Lobbying is a year round activity, and way before a new session, the board has a feeling for what the priorities will be. We recently sent local Leagues a list of what we think will be key items so that local League nominating committees would have some idea of their needs in regard to support for state items.

Priorities change even after they are set, and the issues we now think will be key items may fade in significance before next fall or even during the session. A few sessions ago, we had great hopes for redistricting but what looked promising in September was dead by December. We do not take on impossible causes because doing so affects our credibility on other issues, so redistricting has been dormant.

At the same time, an item not anticipated as a priority may become one. Last session, for example, reproductive choice was not listed as a priority though we always monitor it. But it became a priority during the session, and we lobbied very actively on this issue with the help of Leagues like yours.

The state League is able to respond to items like this that become priorities for the following reason. Each state League item and each national item under which we often act, like PPRC, is a portfolio held by an on- or off-board program director. When the board restructured last June, we retained program portfolios in order to retain our ability to work on selected issues that are important to us even if they are not priorities (for which we like to have the director on board) and also in order to have resource people to help local Leagues that may be using the state position to lobby local government. Waste management is a good example of an issue we monitor but which won't need to be a priority. Since it is my portfolio, I will do what I can to take action that builds upon or preserves things the League has accomplished in this area in the past. My budget will be miniscule, probably \$25, and I won't be entitled to an Action Alert, but I will do what I can, often behind the scenes. We have a number of issues like this, ones that have been priorities that led to success in the past and on which we are known as players. Of course, we also have some other League positions on which we do almost nothing because it has been too many years since we were a player, such as land use.

~~When the board sets priorities, we also consider which of these~~  
*When the board sets priorities, we also consider which of these*  
*secondary priorities might need action. We then urge the legislative*



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information service for a few selected items as well as our stated priorities, enabling us to monitor the bills filed on secondary as well as primary priority and to act on secondary ones if there is an urgent need to do so. On secondary priorities, this often occurs in response to a request from another organization or a legislator. We do not get bills for all issues because it costs too much and we do not have enough volunteers to handle too many big issues.

Program directors with active issues lobby the year round. They get to know the committees and staff that deal with their issue, review the budgets for it, talk to others who lobby on it, read up on it, and testify during the interim. The most effective lobbying often occurs long before the legislative session when we help draft or "undraft" proposed legislation either informally or by service on legislative committees or advisory/resource committees. Therefore, when a bill arrives, we hope we already know something about it.

When a bill is filed, Evelyn Bonavita, as legislative director, sends the bill to the person who holds that portfolio. The program director analyze the bill and does the research necessary to determine whether there is a League position from which to act, and whether action is advisable. She (at least at this time, we are all women) talks to the sponsor and/or his or her staff, others lobbying both pro and con, the agency that will implement the bill, and League people who may know something about it. If she then decides action is needed, she talks to the program vice-president and/or the president to get clearance. If her action is testimony or a lobbying letter, she must have it cleared by one or the other in order to deliver it. She also writes it up for the Legislative Newsletter and has her article cleared by the president or program vice-president. When the president and program vice-president consider the request to act, we must consider not only whether there is a League position but also the advisability of taking the action at that time. Since we know what all the program people are doing, we have to look at each request in the context of the overall League lobbying effort. Since the same legislators may be approached on multiple items, we evaluate whether the proposed action will affect any other things we have asked them for, and we use our priorities to help us make choices when conflicts occur, which they do. (We believe this system is similar to that used at the national level, even though they have both staff and a volunteer lobby corps to help with the work.)

In a multi-issue organization like ours, hard choices are necessary not only because we are volunteers with limited people and monetary resources but also because we cannot be politically effective unless we lobby shrewdly.

If a local League hears of legislation that they want us to support or oppose, the League should call the legislative director or the program director for that item. Sometimes such requests can be granted, and sometimes they cannot be. The program director will then evaluate the issue and go through this clearance process, but she will often need the help of the local League. If the League wants to testify, the same procedure will be used to clear testimony.



Sometimes state law is required to address a purely local situation, such as formation of a hospital district. In such cases, the local League should call as described above.

Occasionally, local Leagues want to take action based on a local position rather than a state position. It is not impossible to do so, but it is a lengthy process to get approval from every League in the state unless the item clearly affects only that local League.

Two things are important to retain out of this lengthy explanation: (1) there is a lot of evaluation that occurs before action is taken at the state or national level; and (2) local Leagues that want the state League to take action on a state issue should ask because it is sometimes possible to do so, even if the item is not a priority. Our experience is that local Leagues are very understanding about the need for priorities and don't question them for trivial matters.

When I sat down to draft this reply, I knew it would take awhile to address your concerns. I think you will see some of this information appear in other places because your questions about priorities and how the state League takes action are surely questions shared by others.

In closing, I want to say that I appreciate your writing and talking about your concerns and giving us the opportunity to reply. The League is not a simple organization in which to work, and the three level structure presents challenges as well as strength. In addition, the three levels depend on each other to carry out the action necessary to achieve the goals for which all of stand. The Tarrant County League not only has a reputation for handling action well but you also are in the unique position of being the constituents of two Speakers of the House. That makes you a very special part of our three-level group of volunteers.

If you have any other questions after reading this, give me a call or write back. You may also want to refer to the state League bylaws, In League, and the other publications listed in the body of the letter, all of which contain information on which my reply is based.

I am looking forward to seeing you at Council!

Sincerely,

Diane B. Sheridan  
President



Johnston

CC: LA  
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return to ASK

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Enclosed please find the letter from the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County to The League of Women Voters of the United States in which we express concern as to local action at the national level on national positions. We seek from state a similiar explanation as to our speaking at the state level on League positions.

We seek from LWV TX a clarification.

Yours Very Truly,

Yours Very Truly,  
*Frances H. Nichols*  
 Frances Harrison Nichols

PS We look forward to seeing all of you at State Council in Sherman.





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

March 10, 1988

Nancy M. Neuman, President  
League of Women Voters of the United States

Dear President Neuman,

It was with great concern that the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County learned of new restrictions being pressed upon local Leagues, limiting their access to action on League positions which at the national level.

This is an unfortunate example of drawing the reins of power into the hands of a smaller group of people, a renewed and emerging threat in a free and thinking society.

From your January, 1988 mailing: "With the exception of a few selected activities to be determined by the national board, local and state Leagues should not take action on any other issues at the national level."

We seek an explanation of when and how this action was accepted by the membership of the League. We appreciate and agree with the need for targeted action on legislative issues at the local, state and national levels. This is important and needed. The League of Women Voters of Tarrant County responds to action alerts. This is an effective tool in achieving important goals established at each level of the League.

However, to be limited to "a few selected activities" means we may have no voice on the entire range of other positions which we have reached at the grass roots level. This restriction severely limits our flexibility in response to state and national issues.

Please provide our Board with background as to this change: when and how it was accomplished and by whom the decision was verified. I very much appreciated talking with Marilyn Reeves, National Board member who chairs the Advocacy Issues Committee. Marilyn's explanation was concise and courteous, if incomplete. It was good to note that a local League's concerns were given importance and due consideration by our National Board.

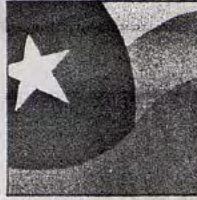
Thank you.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'FHN'.

Frances Hardison Nichols





cc: board

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe, #107 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 512/472-1100

March 21, 1988

Frances Hardison Nichols, President  
League of Women Voters of Tarrant County

Dear Frances:

Thank you again for your hospitality Thursday! I enjoyed having the time to talk both socially and about your concerns about the state and national League.

Despite the fact that we discussed some of the following matters when we talked on March 17, I would like to reply to your March 10 letter, which I had not received at the time that we talked, because it asks about some specific items that I did not address in detail. I hope you will bear with me as I reply because the answers are not brief. I hope, however, that they will clarify some issues that are certainly of importance to all of us.

In reading your letters to Nancy Neuman and to me, I see two items that need clarification: the state board's authorization to act on program, and the process the state board uses to determine when to act. Obviously they are related, but I would like first to explain the state board's authorization to carry out League program.

#### State Board Authorization to Take Action

The LWV-Texas bylaws give the state board responsibility for determining when and how to carry out action under state positions and national League positions applicable to the state level. The bylaws also clarify what is meant by League program.

Article V, Section 4 "...The board shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program on state governmental matters as adopted by the convention."

This section of the bylaws authorizes the state board to do what is necessary to carry out study and action on matters that can be addressed by state government and on which we have positions. This section allows us, for example, to set legislative priorities, to determine when we should take action on a position, and to direct how local Leagues shall do so when the action is before a state governmental body.

The bylaws refer to program adopted by Convention because that is when program is usually adopted, unless an emergency exists. The bylaws also authorize council delegates to add



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to the program in the event of an emergency. Program adopted by a council would fall under the same rules.

Program adopted at convention consists of new studies and action positions on existing items.

Article VI, Section 1(b) "The board of directors shall recommend to the national board that the national board recognize as a local League any group of members of the League of Women Voters of the United States in any community within the state, provided the group meets recognition standards for local Leagues as adopted by the national convention."

Enclosed is a copy of the latest version of measurable and enforceable requirements, the current ones having been adopted by delegates to LWVUS Convention '86. Of course, it has been many years since your League was formed and first sought recognition by demonstrating your ability to meet these standards, your ability to function as a League. All Leagues must continue to meet these requirements in order to maintain recognition. The last requirement, relating to advocacy, does not clarify what you asked in your letter, but I include it to show that part of what a new League must do is to learn how to meet these standards, including the one relating to consistency.

One of the responsibilities of the state and national boards is to provide local Leagues with information about the requirements and how to implement them. Thus we have state League publications like Choosing and Developing Local League Program; Ten Steps to Reaching Member Agreement Successfully; and Program Perspectives. Both boards have tried to recognize the quick turnover that now is typical on many local League boards and provide clear explanations of things we used to assume everyone remembered, such as the fact that consensus is not a vote. Because we are stating those things more clearly of late, they may seem like new policies even when they are not.

Article VIII, Section 5 "The convention shall consider and authorize for action a program, shall elect officers..."

This section, to which you referred in your letter, refers in general to the actions that may be taken by Convention: authorizing a program, electing officers, adopting a budget --not to action meaning lobbying. Authorizing a program means adopting a program of study and action for the following biennium as described in Article XI, which describes the program planning and adoption process.

Article XI Section 4 discusses member action and states:  
"...Local Leagues may act only in conformity with, and not contrary to, a position taken by the League of Women Voters of Texas and/or the League of Women Voters of the United States."



This section refers not only to positions that the League has but also to positions that the League takes to implement the positions we have. In order for a local League to act in conformity with a position the state League takes, the state League must take a position on a particular piece of legislation and that position on the bill must be based on a League position. (Frankly, it would be better if the terminology were different.)

The responsibility for determining when and how to take action based on League positions has always rested with the board at the appropriate level, namely the level of government before which action needs to be taken. The reason is that the board at the corresponding level of League not only must know which positions are applicable but also must know the governmental entities and the other players involved in any lobbying effort at that level of government. These powers are intrinsically tied to the fact that the League is structured on three levels, like the government.

Local Leagues can use local and applicable state and national positions to lobby local governments without clearance from the state or national board because your bylaws give you the authorization to do so. And you can and/or should respond without clearance to state and national League requests to act, like Action Alerts and What You Can Do, something that your League does in an exemplary fashion. If one of your members, on the other hand, wanted to lobby your local government in the name of the League, he or she could not do so without clearance from your board.

The state League can use state and applicable national positions to lobby state government without clearance from the national board because our bylaws give us authorization to do so. If one of our local Leagues wants to lobby the state government, that League cannot do so without clearance from the state board. The process of taking action at the state level is summarized in Taking Action, which can be found both in the State League Directory, LWV-Texas Policy Guide and Program Perspectives. Both publications were revised for this biennium and the current versions mailed to local Leagues last fall.

One type of lobbying often causes confusion, and that is when a local League lobbies before a state legislative committee. Many interim committees hold hearings around the state. If the committee is addressing a priority issue, the state League will testify at one of the hearings. But we like local Leagues to testify in their towns also, based on state League positions and using local information to show why the desired change would help citizens in that town. Since local positions address items that can be addressed by local government and since such positions have not been reached as the result of member agreement statewide, it is not possible to lobby for a local position before a legislative committee except in rare instances when desired legislation would affect only that city. The procedure to follow in this case is for the local League to call the LWV-T program director who holds the portfolio on that issue to obtain clearance to testify.



I have considered Reed Bilz's question as to whether there is a way for local Leagues to appeal a decision of the state board, specifically the state board's decision that we have no position from which to take action on decriminalization of homosexuality.

If local Leagues do not agree with a state League action, I believe there are basically three things they can do. First, the local League can object by formally notifying the state board and asking that the decision be reconsidered. If the board upholds its original decision, the next step would be to take the question to the next Council or Convention. In essence, that is what Phyllis Frye did when she moved an action motion at Convention directing the state board to work to repeal Section 21.06 of the Penal Code. The Action Motion Committee did not recommend the motion because there is no League position from which to act. Delegates voted, and the motion failed. The third step that a local League can take to appeal a board decision they do not like is, of course, to get rid of the board that made the decision at the next opportunity they have to do so. The nominating committee will be meeting at Council and seeking input from both local Leagues and individuals should you wish to take your concerns to them. I did not interpret our conversation as meaning that you wanted to do this, but I do want you to recognize that it is an option.

#### The Process the State Board Uses to Determine When to Take Action

The LWV-Texas Policy Guide contains legislative policy for state board members and associate program directors, but it does not explain exactly how the board decides to take action. (The State Board Handbook contains more detail.) I will try to address a few of the items that may be of interest.

The state League chooses legislative priorities because neither we nor the local Leagues who respond to our requests for help are "staffed" and budgeted to handle as many issues as we have positions to address. In the last ten years at least, there has been an effort to single out no more than six legislative priorities per session (three or four are preferable), but the number varies depending on what we think we can accomplish.

Local Leagues can suggest legislative priorities for the board to consider by contacting the board at any time. Calling or writing the program director for the issue of concern or contacting the legislative director or program vice-president work best. Individuals who want an item to be a priority should first seek the support of their local League. While local Leagues are set up to respond to such requests from individuals, the state League is set up to respond to requests from local Leagues. An exception to this occurs during the "I Wish the League Would..." session of Council, when local Leagues or individual delegates can make suggestions for the state board to consider when choosing priorities.

Priorities are finalized the September before a legislative session in order to allow time to produce advocacy papers and a priority brochure and get them to legislators after the election but before the session



starts. A fall consensus deadline for a study means that the final list may not be approved until the November board meeting when it can be determined whether member agreement has been reached on the new study.

~~When we choose priorities, we choose issues where we think we have a~~ chance of success, where our being there is important to an issue, and where we anticipate the member interest and support that is vital to back up the lobbying done by a program director. For each priority, we must also have a program director on- or off-board with the expertise, time, and energy needed to do the actual lobbying.

Lobbying is a year round activity, and way before a new session, the board has a feeling for what the priorities will be. We recently sent local Leagues a list of what we think will be key items so that local League nominating committees would have some idea of their needs in regard to support for state items.

Priorities change even after they are set, and the issues we now think will be key items may fade in significance before next fall or even during the session. A few sessions ago, we had great hopes for redistricting but what looked promising in September was dead by December. We do not take on impossible causes because doing so affects our credibility on other issues, so redistricting has been dormant.

At the same time, an item not anticipated as a priority may become one. Last session, for example, reproductive choice was not listed as a priority though we always monitor it. But it became a priority during the session, and we lobbied very actively on this issue with the help of Leagues like yours.

The state League is able to respond to items like this that become priorities for the following reason. Each state League item and each national item under which we often act, like PPRC, is a portfolio held by an on- or off-board program director. When the board restructured last June, we retained program portfolios in order to retain our ability to work on selected issues that are important to us even if they are not priorities (for which we like to have the director on board) and also in order to have resource people to help local Leagues that may be using the state position to lobby local government. Waste management is a good example of an issue we monitor but which won't need to be a priority. Since it is my portfolio, I will do what I can to take action that builds upon or preserves things the League has accomplished in this area in the past. My budget will be miniscule, probably \$25, and I won't be entitled to an Action Alert, but I will do what I can, often behind the scenes. We have a number of issues like this, ones that have been priorities that led to success in the past and on which we are known as players. Of course, we also have some other League positions on which we do almost nothing because it has been too many years since we were a player, such as land use.

~~When the board sets priorities, we also consider which of these~~  
*When the board sets priorities, we also consider which of these secondary priorities might need action. We then order the legislative*



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information service for a few selected items as well as our stated priorities, enabling us to monitor the bills filed on secondary as well as primary priority and to act on secondary ones if there is an urgent need to do so. On secondary priorities, this often occurs in response to a request from another organization or a legislator. We do not get bills for all issues because it costs too much and we do not have enough volunteers to handle too many big issues.

Program directors with active issues lobby the year round. They get to know the committees and staff that deal with their issue, review the budgets for it, talk to others who lobby on it, read up on it, and testify during the interim. The most effective lobbying often occurs long before the legislative session when we help draft or "undraft" proposed legislation either informally or by service on legislative committees or advisory/resource committees. Therefore, when a bill arrives, we hope we already know something about it.

When a bill is filed, Evelyn Bonavita, as legislative director, sends the bill to the person who holds that portfolio. The program director analyze the bill and does the research necessary to determine whether there is a League position from which to act, and whether action is advisable. She (at least at this time, we are all women) talks to the sponsor and/or his or her staff, others lobbying both pro and con, the agency that will implement the bill, and League people who may know something about it. If she then decides action is needed, she talks to the program vice-president and/or the president to get clearance. If her action is testimony or a lobbying letter, she must have it cleared by one or the other in order to deliver it. She also writes it up for the Legislative Newsletter and has her article cleared by the president or program vice-president. When the president and program vice-president consider the request to act, we must consider not only whether there is a League position but also the advisability of taking the action at that time. Since we know what all the program people are doing, we have to look at each request in the context of the overall League lobbying effort. Since the same legislators may be approached on multiple items, we evaluate whether the proposed action will affect any other things we have asked them for, and we use our priorities to help us make choices when conflicts occur, which they do. (We believe this system is similar to that used at the national level, even though they have both staff and a volunteer lobby corps to help with the work.)

In a multi-issue organization like ours, hard choices are necessary not only because we are volunteers with limited people and monetary resources but also because we cannot be politically effective unless we lobby shrewdly.

If a local League hears of legislation that they want us to support or oppose, the League should call the legislative director or the program director for that item. Sometimes such requests can be granted, and sometimes they cannot be. The program director will then evaluate the issue and go through this clearance process, but she will often need the help of the local League. If the League wants to testify, the same procedure will be used to clear testimony.



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Sometimes state law is required to address a purely local situation, such as formation of a hospital district. In such cases, the local League should call as described above.

Occasionally, local Leagues want to take action based on a local position rather than a state position. It is not impossible to do so, but it is a lengthy process to get approval from every League in the state unless the item clearly affects only that local League.

Two things are important to retain out of this lengthy explanation: (1) there is a lot of evaluation that occurs before action is taken at the state or national level; and (2) local Leagues that want the state League to take action on a state issue should ask because it is sometimes possible to do so, even if the item is not a priority. Our experience is that local Leagues are very understanding about the need for priorities and don't question them for trivial matters.

When I sat down to draft this reply, I knew it would take awhile to address your concerns. I think you will see some of this information appear in other places because your questions about priorities and how the state League takes action are surely questions shared by others.

In closing, I want to say that I appreciate your writing and talking about your concerns and giving us the opportunity to reply. The League is not a simple organization in which to work, and the three level structure presents challenges as well as strength. In addition, the three levels depend on each other to carry out the action necessary to achieve the goals for which all of stand. The Tarrant County League not only has a reputation for handling action well but you also are in the unique position of being the constituents of two Speakers of the House. That makes you a very special part of our three-level group of volunteers.

If you have any other questions after reading this, give me a call or write back. You may also want to refer to the state League bylaws, In League, and the other publications listed in the body of the letter, all of which contain information on which my reply is based.

I am looking forward to seeing you at Council!

Sincerely,

Diane B. Sheridan  
President





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

DATE: March 14, 1988

TO: Delegates to State Council, April 1988

FROM: Reed Bilz, Action Chair, TCLWV

SUBJECT: Concurrence on Criminal Justice Program Statement

LWV-Houston is proposing a resolution at Council in which we heartily concur. The Tarrant County League studied Houston's proposal last fall and came to the same conclusions Phyllis Frye had reached earlier; the Texas League can take action regarding decriminalization of homosexual acts under its present Criminal Justice program position.

However, our League members did not think that this was a priority item and they did not want to study the issue as we were all in agreement that homosexual conduct in Texas should be decriminalized.

The Tarrant County Board voted to send the State Board a letter explaining the results of our local study and asking that the state be ready to lobby for repeal of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code during the 71st Session. In response to our letter the State Board reiterated their opinion that LWV-T could not lobby under the present state position and that a study would be necessary. Since League members do not want to spend their valuable time studying this issue this stance by the state board effectively quashed Houston's proposal.

We think the Houston League has found a solution to the impasse! The solution is explained in the memo to Council Delegates sent with the last DPM. Houston is asking Council to approve the appointment of a resource committee which will prepare a report to be sent to local Leagues next fall in time for the next legislative session. This is the process that National used on the reproductive choice issue, another one that members did not want to study.

The Tarrant County League urges delegates to support the Houston proposal and to vote in favor of concurrence that repeal of state laws that regulate or criminalize the non-commercial, non-violent sexual intimacy of consenting adults in the privacy of their homes be added to our Criminal Justice position.



MAR 3 1988

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DC

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS  
1212 Guadalupe #107  
Austin, TX 78701

February 27, 1988

To: Frances Nichols and Reed Bilz  
Tarrant County LWV

From: Louise Cummins, Program Vice President  
LWV of Texas

Diane Sheridan asked me to respond to your letter of January 20 in which you expressed the sentiments of your League on decriminalizing homosexual conduct. I apologize for taking so long to reply.

At the time you wrote this the Houston League was proposing a re-study of the Administration of Justice position in order to be able to lobby for the repeal of Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code.

First, let me say that I know that all of us on the state board believe that the criminal statute governing sexual behavior by consenting adults in the privacy of their own home should not be in the Texas Penal Code.

We have looked long and hard at the AJ position and we do not believe that the position covers this problem. The AJ position referred to the application of criminal statutes in an equitable manner--to rich and poor, to black and white. No specific statute was ever studied or even addressed on the basis of being discriminatory. I feel reasonably certain that there are other statutes in the criminal code that are also discriminatory, but we have never supported or opposed any legislation based on this position because of discrimination.

It is our opinion that the broad, overarching statement in the AJ position was not intended to be applied to something as specific as this section of the criminal code.

This is not the first time we have faced a similar dilemma with a program study that did not cover all that we might have wished it would. You may remember that our original domestic violence study first dealt only with programs and that we had to expand the study to include the second part which dealt with domestic violence law. Even now, this study only deals with domestic violence as it applies to women and does not cover child abuse. While we all abhor child abuse, we are not able to act on any lobbying effort that deals with child abuse.

There are many worthy cases that many different League members are interested in. Unfortunately, we are not able to lobby on every important cause. Many League members join efforts of other lobby groups who support causes for which we are not prepared.



Those of us on the state board have relied heavily on the advice of Diana Clark. Diana was the chair of the administration of justice study and remembers the history and intent of it very well. She continues to hold this position off board, and she has done a good deal of research on the Houston League proposal. I know that she would be glad to visit with you about this.

Since you wrote to us, the Houston League has sent out a proposal for an emergency study item. The Houston League is to provide background information on what they are proposing and why they believe it qualifies as an emergency to be considered at Council. Time has been allotted in the Council agenda to consider this proposal. If you have questions about the substance of the proposal, please contact the Houston League. If you have questions about process, please contact Diane Sheridan or myself.

I appreciate all the time and effort the Tarrant County League has given to this matter. I commend your League for always being so thoughtful and thorough. Please call me (or write) if I can be of further assistance.



March 7, 1988

TO: Rowena & Frances

FROM: Diane via the state office

RE: Attached letter from LWV-Tarrant Co.

Diane says that in reading their minutes and VOTER it appears that they oppose city employees registering people to vote.

If you have questions, call Diane.



LWU

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

cc: SO  
TE

FMC  
RR

MAR 3 1988

February 8, 1988

Bruce W. Barrick  
[REDACTED]

Dear Bruce Barrick,

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County reviewed again the proposal made by Human Serv regarding voter registration. The focus of the effort appears to have shifted from an earlier position where city staff members become facilitators in voter registration to a full fledged service provided by the city.

The League wholeheartedly supports and fully engages in voter registration activities. We are elated to see churches, businesses, unions, political parties, schools, colleges and many organizations actively providing opportunities for citizens to become registered to vote. We were recently invited by various groups ( four WalMart stores, two Sams Wholesales, Ridgmar, Hulen and Northeast Malls, TCJC Southeast Campus, City Hall, KXTA-TV ) to assist people to register. For three weeks we had a steady stream of calls to our League office, from citizens seeking information and to whom we provided cards.

We applaud the member groups of Human Serv in their efforts toward voter registration. The League sees our efforts as complimentary to the work of Human Serv.

We feel that the office of Secretary of State and the County Election Offices throughout the State should provide this service. We believe that the present extensive volunteer efforts are appropriate. We support this approach.

Our decision comes with the clearer understanding of the proposal which has evolved out of your efforts. This is the unanimous decision of our Board.

Yours Very Truly,

*Frances H. Nichols*

Frances H. Nichols  
President

✓ Ruth Ann Geer  
Diane Sheridan





DSh  
SO-

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe, #107 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 512/472-1100

August 14, 1987

Mrs. Sharon Jones  
[REDACTED]

Dear Sharon,

Many thanks for writing to tell us about your VOTER problems. What we don't know can hurt us.

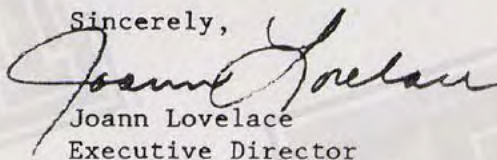
I can't say that I actually know what happened to your issues of the National and Texas VOTERs, but I can guess around a bit.

The national League is striving mightily to straighten out its membership lists. I say "lists" because in the spring they were working with many cartons of printouts that needed updating and consolidating. They have changed computer vendors and are updating all of their member and donor data. They do not expect to be finished until late fall. Therefore, although the Tarrant County League may have submitted your two address changes in timely fashion as they usually do, there may be a long delay in getting your name on the list in Washington. Your non-receipt of the Texas VOTER is a direct result of that delay. We purchase our mailing labels for our VOTER from national because we don't have the capability of keeping up with the list of all Texas members here in the state office. Also, the national and state VOTERs are not forwarded because both are sent via second class postage.

What we'll do is put your name and current address on our list of special temporary labels for the Texas VOTER. We keep names and addresses of members with problems similar to yours on those labels until they appear correctly on the labels purchased from national. I've enclosed the issues of the Texas VOTER published since February '87, and I will send a copy of this note to the Tarrant County League so they will know that we're doing what we can in Austin.

I hope all of this gets straightened out soon. We certainly don't want to lose you as a member! If there is anything else we can do, please let us know.

Sincerely,

  
Joann Lovelace  
Executive Director

Enclosures (2)

cc: LWV-Tarrant County



AUG 13 1987

Dear League,

I joined the Tarrant County League in Sept. '86. The only issue of the "Texas Voter" I've received is Feb. '87!

I wrote to the Tarrant County League a couple of weeks ago & have not heard from them. I haven't received any issues from them since 5-'87!

I wrote to the Nat'l League today. The only issues I've received from them are March & April '87!

I'm considering not renewing my dues in Sept. '87, if I can't at least get my newsletters so I can be informed!

Please help!

Thanks!

Mrs Sharon Jones

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OVER



my  
address when I joined:

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next:

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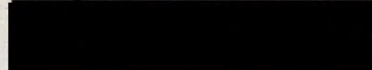
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JAN 6 1987

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe, #107 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 525-1100

January 5, 1987

Linda Hanratty  
LWV-Tarrant County  
Program Vice President



Dear Linda,

Thank you for your informative program planning report. I appreciate your letting us know what new study topics were of most interest even though they did not elicit sufficient support to become recommendations. All but county ordinance making were suggested by other Leagues for either studies or educational publications. Mental health and tort reform received the most support.

We currently have a position supporting ordinance making powers for counties, and we have lobbied in the past for the limited powers counties now have. You probably are aware of the lack of legislative enthusiasm for this subject. If you were interested in this study because of a desire to take local action under such a position, you may want to check the State-Local Relations position or talk to Louise Cummins, who holds this portfolio. If you describe the specifics to Louise, she can help you determine what you can do under the current position.

Congratulations to all of you responsible for the excellent levels of participation in both this and the health care consensus. Best wishes for continued success in 1987.

Sincerely,

Diane B. Sheridan  
Program Vice President



T. Goodrich (2)  
S. D. ✓

August 7, 1986

Dear Tom,

This is a listing of statewide candidates. The Libertarians may or may not be certified--we'll know probably late in August from the Secretary of State's office.

GOVERNOR:	Mark White, Democrat Bill Clements, Republican Theresa S. Doyle, Libertarian
Lt. GOVERNOR:	Bill Hobby, Democrat David Davidson, Republican Bill Howell, Libertarian
ATTORNEY GENERAL:	Jim Mattox, Democrat Roy R. Barrera, Jr., Republican Mike Stephens, Libertarian
COMPTROLLER:	Bob Bullock, Democrat George Meeks, Libertarian
TREASURER:	Ann Richards, Democrat Robert F. Reid, Libertarian
LAND COMMISSIONER:	Garry Mauro, Democrat M. D. Anderson, Jr., Republican Honey Sue Lanham, Libertarian
AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER:	Jim Hightower, Democrat Bill Powers, Republican Rebecca Reed, Libertarian
RAILROAD COMMISSIONER:	John Sharp, Democrat Milton E. Fox, Republican Mr. Chloe "Jack" Daniel, Libertarian
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME CT., PL. 1	Oscar H. Mauzy, Democrat Charles Ben Howell, Republican
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME CT., PL. 2	Robert M. Campbell, Democrat Nathan E. White, Jr., Republican
JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME CT., PL. 3	Jim Wallace, Democrat Wiley H. Rawlins, Libertarian

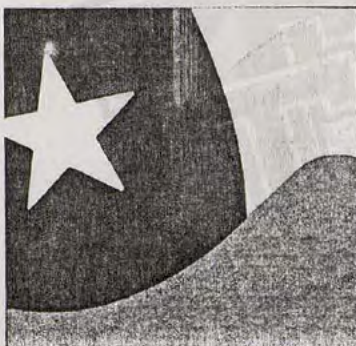
- more -



JUSTICE OF THE  
SUPREME CT.,  
PL. 4  
(unexpired term)

Raul A. Gonzalez, Democrat  
John L. Bates, Republican





S.O.

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe Suite 109 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 512/472-1100

January 28, 1981

Joan Rich  
Chair, Management & Training Services  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
[REDACTED]

Dear Joan:

The League of Women Voters of Texas appreciates your granting (in your letter of October 20, 1980) the League of Tarrant County permission to become two leagues, one including areas of Tarrant County outside the city of Arlington, the other including everything inside the Arlington city limits.

Tarrant County will make the division official at their annual meeting in May. After the division, on the same day, the Arlington members will hold their own annual meeting, adopt bylaws, a budget, a name, and officers and directors. Tarrant County will do the same. However, Tarrant County has not decided on a name change, if any.

The two groups have had an amicable division of all assets - fiscal and physical and are in the process of developing two budgets.

It was during the budget making process that the two groups approached the state board with the following proposal:

that the Tarrant County League take the annual membership count as required on January 1, 1981. A local record would be kept of the actual number of those residing in Arlington as of that date. When the division occurs the Arlington League would be responsible for the PMP on that number, and the Tarrant County League for the remainder.

After discussion of the reasons for the request, and review of the League of Women Voters of the United States guidelines, the state board granted their request. The state board recognizes that a new count



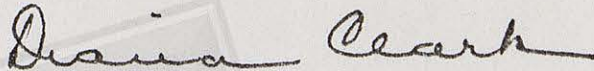
taken by both leagues might differ by an insignificant amount either up or down, but our goal is to help make the division as positive and painless as possible. We believe that since all concerned in Tarrant County and Arlington are united in their request, it was in everyone's interest to agree to their proposal.

We have reiterated to Tarrant County the League of Women Voters of the United States guidelines and policy regarding one league becoming two - that both new groups will be required to report their separate membership totals to the League of Women Voters of the United States as of the effective date of the division regardless of the action of the state league.

However, the League of Women Voters of Texas requests the national board make an exception to its policy and to accept the January 1, 1981 total, divided by the leagues themselves, as the new PMP figures of June 1, 1981.

We await your positive response.

Sincerely,



Diana Clark  
President

DC:ma

cc: Fumi Sugihara  
Beth Brown  
Barbara Materka  
Martha Kissinger  
Ethel Sturgis



League of Women Voters  
of the United States  
1730 M STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

*Materka*

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OCT 24 1980

October 20, 1980

Mrs. Diana S. Clark  
President  
League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe  
Suite 109  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Diana:

Permission has been granted to the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County to become two Leagues, one including areas of Tarrant County outside the city of Arlington, the other including everything within the city limits of Arlington.

Please advise the LWVUS Management and Training Services department of 1) the exact names of the two new Leagues and 2) the name and address of each new Leagues' president. The change of basis and organization is official. We are only holding the final process for the above information. A letter of official notification will be sent to each president at that time.

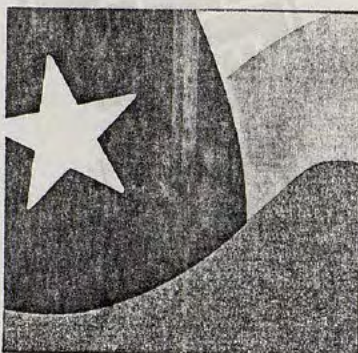
Sincerely,

Joan Rich  
Chair, Management & Training Services

cc: Ms. Sugihara  
Ms. Beth Brown  
Ms. Barbara Materka  
Ms. Martha Kissinger

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P  
Y





NOV 24 1980

League of Women Voters of Texas  
1212 Guadalupe Suite 109 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel. 512/472-1100  
November 21, 1980

Martha E. Kissinger, President  
LWV of Tarrant County  
[REDACTED]

Dear Marty:

In regard to your personal question, I know of no local league in Texas that has a boundary section/article in its bylaws. On page 14 of IN LEAGUE the following statement appears relative to changing the community basis of organization of a local league: "Members usually ratify the change at an annual meeting - - in form of a motion, if the boundaries change or as an amendment to the bylaws, if the name changes."

Now to the questions from the Arlington Transition Committee: There is no state or national league policy requiring a person to join the league in which she/he lives, nor should there be. The league is a democratic organization of citizens who are free to choose whether to join the league and also free to choose which local league to join. On page 43 of IN LEAGUE the following statement appears: "Most members belong to the local League organized where they live. A few members who have more than one residence belong to a local League in more than one community."

Similarly, there is no policy preventing a member who does not live within a league's area from taking part in consensus. A person who pays dues to a local league is free to participate fully in any studies and consensuses that local league undertakes. Consensus is, in any case, not a process of voting.

The Tarrant County unit meetings produced a request for more direction from the national league. As I indicated in my August 13 memorandum, the process you are overseeing is rare. My frank opinion is that the national board and staff know a good deal less about the process and its problems than you and I have already learned. I suspect that in the matter of dividing one league into two, Tarrant County is breaking new ground. Oh, pioneers!

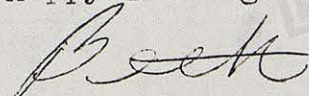


Page 2

I cannot answer the question about how much the Presidential Debates cost the LWV. Fumi Sugihara is the best person in Texas to ask.

Please believe, Marty, that I understand the burden that this transition to division has added to your responsibilities as local league president. Your aim is as it should be, i.e., to complete the process in as democratic and fair a manner as possible. When it is all over, perhaps you will be the one to "write the book" for the enlightenment of the national league and all the rest of us.

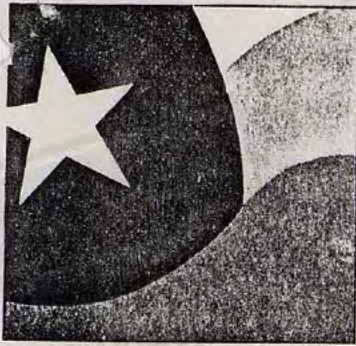
Happy Thanksgiving and best to all,



Beth Brown  
Organization Vice President

cc: Clark, Kidwell, Materka, Sturgis, SO





AUG 18 1980

# MEMORANDUM

1-LWV  
Arlington  
file

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

1212 Guadalupe, No. 109 • Austin, Texas 78701 • Tel 512/472-1100  
August 13, 1980

TO: Marty Kissinger, President, LWV/Tarrant County  
Joyce Morgan, Arlington Transition Liaison

Dear Marty and Joyce:

The three of us know that it is bad form to open with apologies, but I shall do just that. I apologize for not responding to Joyce's letter of application for provisional league status. ABC's For Changing the Organizational Basis of a Local League was subsequently put into your hands, and I assumed that it would constitute an adequate response.

I also apologize for the erroneous signals I sent regarding support positions in local program. At the time that the process of gradual separation was initiated, my understanding was that there was no alternative to Arlington's going through the provisional process. Because provisionals may not adopt local program, I made the judgment that Arlington would start from scratch. I was wrong about this from the beginning. Arlington may begin as a fully-recognized local league.

I have in hand the report to members of action taken at the May 17, 1980 annual meeting of the Tarrant County League. My comments are based on the adopted local program for 1980-1981.

The Arlington league may assume the support position on Voting Machines, but must decide for itself whether to adopt the restudy and evaluation of technology, preference, etc. Arlington may assume the support position on County Government, but must either change or delete the emphasis; I assume that the Fort Worth/Mid Cities group is responsible for the update of the county booklet. Clearly, Arlington may assume the support positions on Legal Services, Services to Children and Youth, Library Services, and Public Transportation. But Arlington must decide for itself whether to adopt the ACTION position under Public Transportation.

The Public Education study appears to relate only to FWISD, and therefore Arlington would not assume that position. The Arlington City Study will be complete, so Arlington must decide for itself what aspect of City Government to adopt for study and consensus.

Tarrant County will, of course, retain all the positions on the program list, only deleting the emphasis on Arlington under City Government.



In order to avoid any further wrong signals, I have conferred with the MTS department at the national office regarding PMP. The MTS staff subsequently took the matter to the MTS committee of the national board. The national board agrees that the process I shall now describe is the proper one.

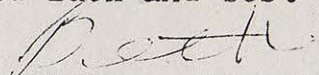
The Tarrant County League as presently constituted is financially responsible for national PMP for FY April 1, 1980 - March 31, 1981. This PMP is based on the Tarrant County membership figure as of January 1, 1980. The present Tarrant County League will cease to exist when the vote to disband is taken. When the two groups then vote to reorganize, two new leagues come into being. I understand that the proposed effective date is June 1, 1981. The two new leagues will report their June 1, 1981 membership figures, and each league will be responsible for national PMP, based on those figures, for the entire FY April 1, 1981 - March 31, 1982. The first quarterly payment on that year's national PMP will, in fact, be due about the time that the new leagues come into existence.

Similarly, each new league will pay state PMP based on June 1, 1981 membership figures for the entire FY June 1, 1981 - May 31, 1982.

This seems to me and to the national board the fairest way to proceed. Let me make an additional point in anticipation of a question that may arise later: While the state board heartily approve the decision to become two leagues, we must, for the present, continue to think in terms of the Tarrant County League as it currently exists. We therefore request that Tarrant County report its January 1, 1981 membership figure as in the past. We will need to use that figure in budget planning, etc., until such time as the disbandment and reorganization is fait accompli.

According to the national office, one league becoming two is a rare event. You are to be commended for pursuing the process in so careful and deliberate a manner. I urge particular attention to the necessary lead time as indicated at the end of the ABC's.

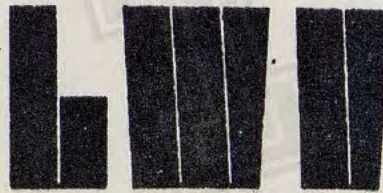
Good luck and best wishes,

  
Beth Brown, Organization Vice President

cc: Clark, Clem, Keever, Materka, MTS Dept., SO, file



APR 11 1980



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TARRANT COUNTY

April 2, 1980

Madeleine Appel  
Fumi Sugihara  
Diana Clark  
✓LWV/Texas FYI.  
Beth Brown  
Georgia Kidwell  
Joyce Morgan

Dear Madeleine, Fumi, et al,

Last year at State Convention, when I talked with Madeleine about the Tarrant County League's proposed self-examination (which was eventually dubbed the Evaluation Committee), she told me to call on her for help at any time. And the time has come again! So here I am asking for help, especially in knowing which direction to go.

A group of Tarrant County League members who live in Arlington have met and decided to pursue the possibility of forming their own League. They have informed the Tarrant County League President, Georgia Kidwell, who asked our Field Service Representative, Barbara Materka, to meet and work with them in any way they desire. I was invited to attend their initial meeting Tuesday night. I'm sure Barbara will keep you informed as to their intentions, direction, progress, etc. But I need help, as the incoming President of the Tarrant County LWV, in heading off one particular problem by getting things arranged with state and national Leagues ahead of time.

The group discussed several possibilities, one of which is for Arlington members (about 45 members, or about 1/4 of the Tarrant County League membership) to form a provisional League and work toward recognition as a local League; another is for the Tarrant County League to reorganize itself to achieve some of the same goals the Arlington members have in mind. Barbara favors their forming their own League. I want them to stay with the Tarrant County League, but have assured them that I will personally work with them in any way needed to effect a smooth transition if they decide to form an Arlington League. The decision is theirs, and I will abide by it.

The problem that we see as being out of our hands and therefore needing outside help is this: In their letter to the board of directors, the Arlington members say they have decided not to make any move toward separation before June 1, 1981. Tarrant County

Promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in Government.



Appel, Sugihara, et al

-2-

April 2, 1980

League must report its membership total, on which the Per-Member-Payment to both state and national Leagues will be based, as of January 1, 1981. What I want to know is who should I talk to, especially at National Convention, about getting a written agreement that if the Arlington members form their own League, that proportion of the Tarrant County Per-Member-Payment will be "forgiven," transferred to the Arlington Provisional League, or whatever? I hope that the Tarrant County League will be very generous in sharing whatever material possessions we have with the new League; after all, they have helped to pay for everything we have. However, we cannot afford to pay Per-Member-Payments on 45-50 members who are no longer contributing either their money or their hard work to our local League. And, for the sake of the next President and the 1981-1982 board of directors, I want something from both state and national Leagues in writing!

I assume that you will be at Council in Waco, and hope that one or both of you will have time to work with Tarrant County League members on this problem. Unfortunately, no one from Arlington will attend. President Georgia Kidwell and I will be Delegates, and Organization VP Polly Cave (who will be President-Elect come June) will attend as an Observer. We plan to be in Waco for the pre-Council workshop, if that will help in scheduling time for a discussion with you.

Many thanks for your help and understanding.

Sincerely,

*mk*  
(Mrs. T. A. Kissinger)  
President-Elect  
League of Women Voters  
of Tarrant County

*Martha E. Kissinger*  
913 Green River Trail  
Fort Worth, Texas 76103



APR 11 1980

To the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County Board:

We, the Arlington members of the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, are concerned about functional problems in the Tarrant County League. We recognize some communication problems, and a variety of other problems, resulting from our very large geographic distribution and diverse community orientation. We desire more visibility and influence in the Arlington community. As a result of our growing concern and desire to serve our community better, we have begun a process of examining alternatives for league organization. We have met this evening, March 31, with Barbara Maturka, our State Field Service Representative, to learn the steps of one alternative, seeking provisional league status as an Arlington League of Women Voters. We discussed briefly, but would like to consider more deeply, some alternative structures for the Tarrant County League which would enable us to achieve our goals. We feel that participation in this process by some key members of the Tarrant County League Board is a desirable and essential ingredient in a systematic and well informed decision making process. We have arranged for a meeting of a committee of Arlington members on Wednesday, April 16, at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Lisann Peters, 2108 River Forest, Arlington, and invite concerned members of the LWV/TC Board to attend with ideas for alternative structures within the Tarrant County League to allow us to serve Arlington better. Joyce Morgan has agreed to serve as chairman of this ad hoc committee of Arlington members.

We plan to use the second April unit meetings to explore these alternatives further with our membership. If it proves feasible to pursue any changes, we will decide then any specific steps we will take and the timetable we will follow. It is the general consensus of those present tonight that, should we decide to seek provisional league status, no official change would occur before June 1, 1981.

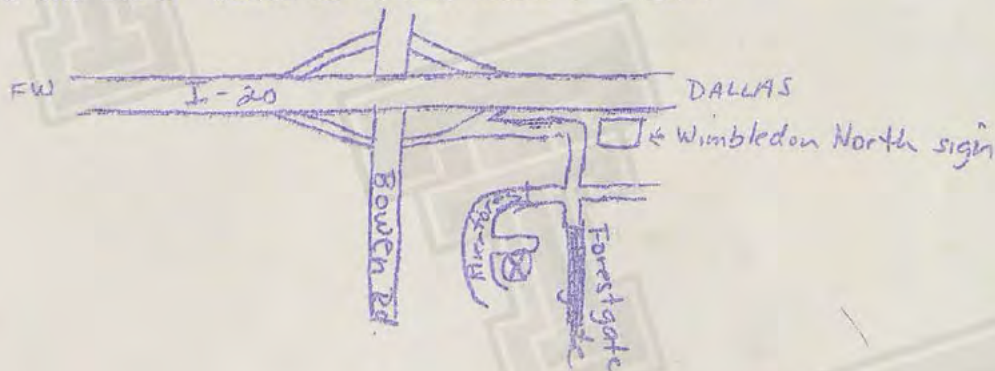
Arlington members present at special meeting March 31 included:

Mary Jo Patten  
Joyce Morgan  
Mary Catherine Monroe  
Jonna Short  
Bonnie Bowman

Crystal McElhanon  
Peggy Terry  
Lisann Peters  
Priscilla Promise

#### Directions to 2108 Riverforest Court

From I-20, exit at Bowen Road. Cross Bowen Road and continue along I-20 access road, to dead end at Wimbledon North Billboard. Turn right onto Forestgate. Turn right onto Riverforest Drive. Go around curve. Riverforest Court is the first court on the left. #2108 is second house on right.





March 26, 1980

MAR 27 1980

TO: Barbara Materka cc: Clark, Sturgis, SO file  
FROM: Beth Brown

RE: Possible provisional status for Arlington members of Tarrant County

There is to be a meeting on March 31, which Barbara will attend, to discuss this. Barbara called last week; I've been out of town so this is late.

Numbers: The requirement for a from-the-ground-up provisional is 40 at the start. We also say that a state unit with 25 members maintained for a year may become provisional. Arlington should not seek provisional status with fewer than 25 members, with the additional proviso that membership growth will be of prime importance during the provisional period.

Money: The issue of the \$200 first-year fee is bound to arise. We are even now coping with the question in the matter of the Montgomery Co. state unit becoming a provisional. SB will be discussing the subject at Waco in April. We want to be equitable in monetary matters, but Arlington should understand that there are expenses incurred by the state board in serving a first-year provisional. Upon recognition as a provisional all Arlington member dues are paid to the local League and things proceed as outlined in Requirements for Provisional Leagues. (3 copies enclosed)

At least one finance drive must be conducted during the provisional period. This serves to demonstrate that there is adequate community support and that there is sufficient member commitment to maintain a League.

Program: I may be floundering here, so y'all help. The Arlington City Study is near completion. This will equate to the required local gov't survey. When it is complete and has been reviewed by SB, a local program may be proposed and adopted for a unit of government which has been studied. This program study may encompass only the city of ~~government~~ <sup>Arlington</sup>. The Arlington people must understand that they do not take with them any of the program positions of the Tarrant County League except those which resulted from studies of purely local Arlington issues. I'm not sure that TC is possessed of any positions relative only to Arlington. If such do exist, Arlington should assume responsibility for acting under them, restudying, dropping, etc. Once the Arlington provisional is in operation, the Tarrant County League will no longer be "acting" before the Arlington City Council except with the permission of the Arlington provisional, and then only on issues that are of demonstrable county-wide impact and importance.

A provisional League may not take action on local issues, even when a local program has been adopted and studied. Only a fully recognized local League may act before appropriate governmental bodies on local issues. We must be sure that Arlington understands this. Once recognized as a local League, Arlington will not be able to act before the County Commissioners Court except on positions arrived at in their local studies and consenses and then only in matters relating solely to Arlington. The Tarrant County League is the "League of record" for the county government; an Arlington League would be the "League of record" for Arlington municipal government. This must be made absolutely clear to everyone, or all is chaos.

OVER



12.9  
An Arlington provisional would be able to act on state and national positions under supervision of the advisor. We must assume, I suppose, at least minimal familiarity with state and national program. But we do also insist that active study/update of national and state program be vigorously undertaken during the provisional period.

Name: Provisional League of Women Voters of Arlington, Texas.  
Any suggestion that Tarrant County change its name is rejected out of hand. TC was here first and is, as indicated above, the League of record, etc. Should the Arlington provisional be recognized, all that is required of Tarrant County is a motion indicating that the City of Arlington is expressly excluded from TC's governmental jurisdiction. INVUS indicates that a change in boundary does not require a bylaw change. See In League, p. 14.

If Arlington can meet requirements and wants to go on its own, Tarrant County cannot prevent it. But jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities must be clearly understood. The restriction on local action as a provisional should be stressed, as well as the requirement for national and state program study. If Arlington decides to pursue the provisional possibility, a leader of the process should be designated. When I have heard from you, Barbara, I will send the designated leader the official forms for application for recognition as a provisional.

A separate League entity in Arlington is, in many ways, a consummation devoutly to be wished. All aspects of the process should, however, be thoroughly understood in advance. I rather hope that an absolute and final decision will not be made on March 31. If there is evidence of any reservations or doubts, encourage further consideration and another meeting at a later date. I do not, Barbara dear, consider that you are to be the "advisor of record" for an Arlington provisional. That honor will go to some SB member (not Ethel, but whom, Diana?). Barbara is just (?) the lovely lady who will get us past this first hump.

This verbose memo probably raises more questions than it answers. It was typed with the suitcases still unpacked. Don't fail to call me when you have read it, if you disagree or have other problems with its contents. Excuse, please, misspellings, typos, etc. I hope the meaning is clear despite them.

Why didn't anyone tell me that as Org. Veep/FSD, my life would consist of doing things I don't know how to do?

Diana will not read this until after the fact. Ethel, do let me hear from you if you disagree, etc. I need all the help I can get.

My best to all,



*Tarrant Co.*

4326

On Friday, April 14, 1972, Marjorie M. Watson (Jerry Watson), representing the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, joined four other citizens in a suit asking that Fort Worth city officials and the State Attorney General be instructed to consider only the total vote in the recent bond election to build a main library and not to divide the votes into sub-categories in assessing the election results.

The League took this action for two reasons. First, the Principles under which the League operates say that "every citizen should be protected in his right to vote; . . . and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination." An election in which the ballots of non-property-owners are disregarded unless they agree with those of the majority of property owners infringes on the right to vote of the non-property-owning voters.

In addition, the League has worked long and hard in support of a new central library for the City of Fort Worth and feels that since the library bonds received a majority of the votes in the recent bond election, the City should be able to sell these bonds and build a badly needed facility.

The League has entered this suit with an understanding that city officials and the State Attorney General are following the State Constitution as it has been interpreted by the State courts and that, therefore, their actions are entirely proper. We contend that any method which gives a person the right to cast a ballot in an election carries with it the right to have that ballot counted in that election without restriction.



The League entered the suit with the understanding that it was being filed in the way best calculated to resolve the issue, achieve passage of the library bonds, and not involve the transit bonds. We

We are convinced furthermore that the issue must be resolved quickly and clearly, and it is our hope that this suit will have that desirable effect.