

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BYLAWS

(Last revised April 2011)

Article I

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida. This local League is also an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of Florida.

Article II

Purposes and Policy

Section 1. Purposes. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Section 2. Political Policy. The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

Article III

Membership

Section 1. Eligibility. Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the League shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Types of Membership

Voting Members. Citizens at least 18 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS; (1) individuals who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be honorary life members excused from the payment of dues.

Article IV

Board of Directors

Section 1. Number, manner of selection, and term of office. The board of directors shall consist of the officers of the League, six elected directors, and not more than six appointed directors. One half of the elected directors shall be elected by the general membership at each annual meeting and shall serve for a term of two years, or until their successors have been selected and qualified. The elected members shall appoint such additional directors, not exceeding six, as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the League. The term of office of the appointed directors shall be one year and shall expire at the conclusion of the next annual meeting.

Section 2. Qualifications. No person who is not a voting member of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, shall be elected or appointed or shall continue to serve as an officer or director of this organization.

Section 3. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the board of directors by reason of resignation, death, or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled until the next annual meeting by a majority vote of the remaining members of the board of directors. Three consecutive absences from a board meeting of any member, without valid reason, may be deemed a resignation, upon action of the board.

Section 4. Powers and Duties. The board of directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership. It shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program as adopted by the national convention, state convention, and annual meeting. The board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.

Section 5. There shall be at least nine regular meetings of the board of directors annually. The president may call special meetings of the board of directors and shall call a special meeting upon the written request of five members of the board.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of the members of the board of directors shall constitute a quorum.

Article V Officers

Section 1. Enumeration and election of officers. The officers of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, shall be a president, or co-presidents, a first vice president, a second vice president, a secretary and a treasurer, who shall be elected for terms of two years by the general membership at an annual meeting and take office immediately. The president, the first vice president, and the secretary shall be elected in odd numbered years.

Section 2. The president. The president shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the board of directors unless the president shall designate another person to preside. The president may, in the absence or disability of the treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts and notes. The president shall have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the president and perform such other duties as may be designated by the board. In the event of co-presidents, the duties will be determined and assigned by the board of directors.

Section 3. The vice president. (a) The vice president or co-vice-presidents shall, in the event of the absence, disability, resignation, or death of the president, possess all powers and perform all duties of that office. (b) The co-vice presidents shall perform such other duties as the president and the board may designate.

Section 4. The secretary. The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the League at which business is conducted and of all meetings of the board of directors. The secretary shall notify all officers and directors of their election. The secretary shall sign, with the president, all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the board and shall perform such other functions as may be incident to the office.

Section 5. The treasurer. The treasurer shall collect and receive all moneys due. The treasurer shall be the custodian of these moneys, shall deposit them in a bank designated by the board of directors, and shall disburse the same only upon order of the board. The treasurer shall present statements to the board at their regular meetings and an annual report to the annual meeting. The books of the treasurer shall be audited at the end of the fiscal year. Said audit shall be due May 1st of each year.

Article VI
Financial Administration

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, shall commence on the first day of April each year.

Section 2. Dues. (a) When LWV-US or LWV-Florida raises per member payment (PMP), the annual dues of LWV-Manatee will be automatically raised in like amount at the beginning of the fiscal year. The Board at its discretion may vote to waive this increase. (b) Any other change in the amount of annual dues shall be determined by vote of the membership at the annual meeting. (c) The membership year is January 1 through December 31. All members' dues shall be payable on January 1. Any member who fails to pay dues within three months after they become payable shall be dropped from the membership, upon approval of the board. (d) When two members reside at the same address and a common household, they shall be required to pay only one and one-half of the determined dues.

Section 3. Budget. A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the Board of Directors to the annual meeting for adoption. The budget shall include support for the work of the League as a whole.

Section 4. Budget Committee. A budget committee shall be appointed by the board of directors at least two months prior to the annual meeting to prepare a budget for the ensuing year. The proposed budget shall be sent to all members one month before the annual meeting. The treasurer shall not be eligible to serve as chairman of the budget committee.

Article VII
Meetings

Section 1. Membership Meetings. There shall be at least four meetings of the general membership each year. Time and place shall be determined by the board of directors.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. An annual meeting shall be held between April 1st and April 30th, the exact date to be determined by the board of directors. The annual meeting shall (a) adopt a local program for the ensuing year; (b) elect officers and directors and members of the nominating committee; (c) adopt an adequate budget; (d) transact such other business as may properly come before it.

Section 3. Quorum. Fifteen members shall constitute a quorum at all general meetings of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida.

Article VIII
Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominating Committee. A nominating committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the board of directors. The chairman and two members, who shall not be members of the board, shall be elected at the annual meeting. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current nominating committee. The other members of said committee shall be appointed by the board of directors immediately following the annual meeting. Any vacancy occurring in the nominating committee shall be filled from the general membership by appointment of the board of directors. It shall be the duty of this committee to nominate a slate consisting of the candidates for each office to be filled at the annual meeting.

Suggestions for nominations for officers and directors may be sent to this committee by any voting members.

Section 2. Report of the Nominating Committee and Nominations from the Floor. One month prior to the date of the annual meeting, the nominating committee shall send to all members a report of the slate of candidates nominated. The report of the nominating committee shall be presented to the annual meeting. Immediately following presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member, provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Elections. The elections shall be by ballot. When there is but one nominee for an office, the secretary may be instructed to cast one ballot. A majority vote of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted at the annual meeting.

Article IX Program

Section 1. Authorization. The governmental principles adopted by the national convention and supported by the League as a whole constitute the authorization for the adoption of a program.

Section 2. Program. The program of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, shall consist of: (a) action to implement the principles and (b) such current local governmental issues as the membership at the annual meeting shall choose for concerted study and action.

Section 3. The annual meeting shall act upon the program using the following procedures: (a) The board of directors shall consider the recommendations sent in by voting members two months prior to the annual meeting and shall formulate a proposed program. (b) The proposed program shall be sent to all members one month before the annual meeting. (c) A majority vote of voting members at the annual meeting shall be required for adoption of subjects in the proposed program as presented to the annual meeting by the board of directors. (d) Recommendations for program submitted by voting members two months prior to the annual meeting but not recommended by the board of directors shall be considered by the annual meeting, provided that: (1) The annual meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote. (2) The annual meeting shall adopt the item by a two-thirds vote. (e) Changes in the program, in the case of altered conditions, may be made, provided that: (1) Information concerning the proposed changes has been sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed. (2) Final action by the membership is taken at a succeeding meeting.

Section 4. Member action. Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters (a) on legislative measures only when authorized to do so by the appropriate board (national or state) and (b) on a local level when a position has been established by the local board through consensus of said local League.

Article X National Convention, State Convention, and Council

Section 1. National Convention. The membership or the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the national office, shall select delegates from the League of Women Voters of Manatee County who are voting members to that convention in the number allotted.

Section 2. State Convention. The membership or board of directors of the League of Women Voters of Manatee County, Florida, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates who

are voting members must be sent to the state office, shall select delegates from the League of Women Voters of Manatee County who are voting members to that convention in the number allotted.

Section 3. State Council. (Same as for state convention)

Article XI Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and when they are not inconsistent with these *Bylaws*.

Article XII Amendments

These *Bylaws* may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members at an annual meeting, providing a quorum is present and said amendments were submitted to the board of directors in writing at least two months prior to the annual meeting and sent to the general membership at least one month in advance of the annual meeting.

PURPOSE AND POLICIES OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Policies of the LWV of Manatee County:

Revised March 2012

Coalition Policy:

1. It is permissible for the League to form or join a non-partisan coalition for the purpose of joint activity as long as the purpose of the coalition, as well as the action anticipated, is carefully outlined. Approval by the Board is required. Possible conflict of interest between the various groups must be considered before the League participates in the coalition.
2. A Board member may serve on another community committee or board as liaison between that group and the League, with Board permission, as long as the joint project presents no conflict of interest. If such a conflict arises, the League and its representatives must disassociate themselves from the group, and if deemed necessary, a public announcement of the dissociation be made.

Nonpartisan Policy:

The Bylaws of the League of Women of the United States specify that the League "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate." It is the responsibility of each member to carefully guard the League's reputation for nonpartisanship. To carry out this policy, the Board has adopted the following guidelines:

1. No political or candidate material may be distributed at League meetings by candidates, their representatives, League members or members of the public. However, candidates may appear, speak on issues, and distribute appropriate literature at a candidates' forum where opponents have also been invited and are in attendance.
2. Members of the League:
 - a. May participate actively in partisan politics, work for candidates, run for political office, and serve in elected office.

- b. May express partisan views as individuals, but not as League members.
- c. May not solicit League membership while campaigning for a candidate or working for a political party.

3. Board members:

When representing the League: Board members may not express any partisan views or engage in any partisan activities when acting as a representative or liaison for the League.

When engaging in personal activities:

- a. Except for the League President and Voter Services Chair, may contribute to political parties and candidates.
- b. Except for the League President and Voter Services Chair, may participate in political activities. Board members must exercise particular caution in areas where their active participation may be publicized and bring to question the League's nonpartisan stance.
- c. May not serve on a board or other leadership position of a political party.
- d. May not host candidate coffees, fundraisers or other meetings for incumbents or candidates.
- e. May not publicly indicate a candidate or party choice, i.e., using car bumper stickers, wearing party or candidate buttons, etc.

4. Board members must resign from the Board:

a. Immediately upon declaring their candidacy for public office. The resignation should be released to the news media and published in the Voter newsletter. The decision regarding eligibility of this

member to serve on the Board again will be left to the discretion of the Board.

b. Prior to working in a highly visible position for a political party or candidate.

5. Public office holders are not eligible to serve on the Board, but may join the League and serve on committees.

6. When there is doubt as to whether a conflict of interest exists with a Board member's political activity, the matter shall be resolved by a vote of the Board, excluding the person(s) who may have the possible conflict.

Position taking:

1. No one except the president or designee may officially state a League position or sign its letters.
2. Members may express their own views on issues as individuals, but they must make it clear that they are not speaking for the League, if the League position differs from their own.
3. A local League may determine its positions on local issues, after studying those issues. A local League may not take state positions unless already taken by the state or coordinated with the state League, or national positions unless already taken or coordinated with the national League.