Legislative Visibility and Advocacy Skills

Carolyn Caywood, Mary Crutchfield, Carol Noggle, Julia Tanner
Legislative Visibility and Advocacy

• Lobbying vs Advocacy, Action
  Carol Noggle, Julia Tanner  20 min

• Legislative Priorities
  Mary Crutchfield LWV-VA  10 min

• Managing Local League Legislative Agenda
  Carolyn Caywood, LWV-SHR  10 min
Lobbying vs. Advocacy

**ADVOCACY**

Advocacy: activities promoting League positions. One type of Advocacy is Lobbying.

Examples: analyze issues, provide info, make reform recommendations, provide forums, write letters to the editor, testify, join coalitions.

**LOBBYING**

An attempt to influence specific legislation.

An action that speaks in favor of, recommends, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others, concerning specific legislation.
Lobbying vs. Advocacy

**NON-LOBBYING ADVOCACY EXAMPLE**

IRS closes education tax loophole.
- Op-Eds appear in support and against.
- League member drafts LTE.

Does not relate to specific legislation.

**LOBBYING EXAMPLE**

Education issue: school choice
- League drafts study
- LWV-VA votes for Position
- Lobbyist lobbies against specific legislation (SB-1356)

Related: Action alert to members to contact legislators, to oppose SB-1356 as individuals.
Current Advocacy Examples

Complete Count for 2020 Census: Community education, outreach, collaboration

Election Security and Protection: assure local funds for equipment and personnel for elections

Community Education: Arrange for debates, candidate forums. Educate on changes in districts / precincts, what is on ballot, deadlines, VOTE411 Voter Guides.
2019 SPECIAL SESSION I

Convened July 9, 2019

Bills & Resolutions: Status of individual bills and related information

General Assembly Members: Member sponsored legislation

Standing Committees: Legislation referred to committee

Daily Floor Calendars: Legislative agendas

Communications: Legislation communicated between houses

House Minutes / Senate Minutes: Record of floor sessions

Meetings: House and Senate committee meeting schedule

Statistics: Session statistics

Lobbyist-in-a-Box: Subscription-based bill tracking service

Cumulative Index: Subject index of bills and resolutions

House Video: House session video

Senate Video: Senate session video

2019 Session: Convened January 9, 2019
2018 Special Session I: Convened April 11, 2018
2018 Special Session II: Convened August 30, 2018
League in Action: Your Voice Matters
The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Virginia is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government, and influence public policy through education and advocacy.”

The League of Women Voters of Virginia
Positions-in-Brief, updated Spring 2018
Positions ➫ Action ➫ Results

“Action” can mean lobbying for a specific bill or general advocacy

Examples?

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Why Does It Work?

2019 Post-Legislative Forum
April 26, 2019 | 8:30 a.m.
Williamsburg Regional Library
Best Practices

- Identify yourself as a constituent
- Question or elevator speech
- Report out

whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov
Action

CALL, EMAIL, OR WRITE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

• Pros and Cons

ATTEND LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

• Make Your Ask
• Stay Concise
• Video

IN PERSON ACTIONS

CALL A LOCAL RADIO SHOW

WRITE AN LTE

Timely, Concise, Composed, Get Help

MEET IN PERSON

• Know Your Lawmaker
• Lead With Your Ask
• Practice your Elevator Speech
• Have a Leave Behind
• Photos
Laws and Process

• Constitution of Virginia
• Rules
• Code of Virginia

Tools

• VirginiaGeneralAssembly.gov
• LIS.virginia.gov
• RichmondSunlight.com
• VPAP.org

Photo Credit: VirginiaGeneralAssembly.gov
Committee Hearings

The Room Where It Happens

• Reported
• Defeated
• Passed By For The Day
• Passed By Indefinitely
• Tabled
• Left In Committee

Photo Credits: VirginiaGeneralAssembly.gov; Jane Materna
Pass or Fail?
The Fate of 2019 Legislation

Outcome of General Assembly Bills
There were 2,362 bills introduced in 2019, excluding commending and memorializing resolutions.

950 PASSED
1,311 KILLED
101 CONSOLIDATED

PASSED

Margin of Passed Bills

- Unanimous 549
- With Opposition 401
- 401

KILLED

Where Bills Died

- Senate Committee 449
- Floor / Conference Committee 52
- House Committee 256
- House Subcommittee 554

Source:
Division of Legislative Automated Systems

Notes:
1. Calculations in the "where bills died" section does NOT include measures that failed to pass, but were consolidated into related legislation.
2. Legislation "consolidated" into related bills was included among bills that did not pass.
Dynamics

- Mechanics and Pragmatism
- Power of the Majority
- Power of the League
  - Advocacy Challenge
  - Issue Teams
  - Events, e.g. Redistricting Forum 11/17
"Active citizen participation is an integral part of a functioning representative democracy. Members of the General Assembly want and need citizen input when crafting laws."

VirginiaGeneralAssembly.gov / VirginiaLegislature
Retrieved September 11, 2019
Hampton Roads Legislative Collaborative Table

Completely ad hoc – no formal membership, no dues, no bylaws or MOUs.

Members of any non-partisan organization that supports social justice are welcome.

We meet as members, not as officers or spokespersons.

More than 50 people from more than 20 organizations
Building a Collaboration

How?
Building a Collaboration

> Disrupt silos
> Go to the grassroots
> Invest in relationships
> De-polarize
### Structure around an advocacy calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative Collaborative Table</th>
<th>General Assembly Session</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June    Spring Priority meeting</td>
<td>In Richmond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. Social Justice U</td>
<td>In Hampton Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov./Dec. Legislator visits</td>
<td>In your pajamas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June:

Evaluating our advocacy
June: Choosing Local Legislative Priorities

Those present come to consensus on issues for collaboration

Each shares a priority

Clumping issues

Dots & Discussion
Volunteers organize a briefing on the issues

A visit coordinator is recruited for each district
September: Briefing on the Prioritized Issues

Commit to visit your Delegate and State Senator as a group
November-December Visits with Legislators

14 House Districts,
8 Senate Districts

“No permanent enemies,
no permanent friends.”
January - March? Segue to LWV

Hampton Roads Roundtable

Richmond
January - March? Communication Networks

League of Women Voters® of Virginia

Action Alert

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF VIRGINIA

Advocacy Group

Where League members meet to share news, exchange ideas, and empower each other on the "hot issues" of Legislative Activities at state and national levels.
Why we do this

To build a network of like-minded advocates,

To increase League visibility in our community,

To attract new members and increase our diversity,

To strengthen relationships with local legislators,

To amplify our voice in state government,

To nurture our members’ skills and engagement,

To promote participation in WLRT, and

To build our community’s civic capacity.