

## **LWV Boards: Making Decisions**

### **Organization of the Board**

Leagues operate under a variety of board structures. Many League boards assign specific portfolios or areas of focus (e.g., membership, development, communications, advocacy, voter services, etc.) to their members, while others have established three or four committees organized around priorities identified by the board. Some Leagues have created the position of president-elect to provide an automatic succession mechanism.

Establishing co-presidents or leadership teams is also a way Leagues are organizing themselves to share the duties of the president. It is important, however, for co-presidents or leadership teams to define clearly the duties and responsibilities of each. It is not necessary to change League bylaws in order to have co-presidents, rather than a single president.

Executive committees, consisting of the president (or co-presidents) and several board members, can assume specific assignments and take action on board matters between regular board meetings, in accordance with powers granted them in the bylaws.

### **Making Decisions**

Board meetings are held as often as needed for the board to plan, direct and evaluate the work of the League. Frequency of meetings is usually stipulated in the bylaws. The board focuses on the broad policy, program and administrative decisions that must be made and should not get bogged down in detailed planning and implementation. These are best left to committees or assigned volunteers. Agendas for upcoming meetings and minutes of previous meetings should be circulated to board members ahead of time, along with written board briefing materials for members to review. Use of a timed agenda will assure that there is an opportunity to discuss each topic and will facilitate beginning and ending the meeting on time.

Although most board meetings will probably take place in person, bylaws may authorize electronic meetings if they are conducted by a technology (such as telephone or video conferencing) that is available to all and allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time. E-mail is useful for communications between board meetings, but official decisions may be made by e-mail only if:

- the bylaws specifically authorize them and
- discussion/debate procedures have been adopted in advance.