TWITTER CHEAT SHEET

Like Facebook, Twitter is a great way to engage with the public and our members. And, it is a good way to interact with the media, key opinion leaders and our organizational partners. Twitter differs from Facebook in some important ways, most notably, the length of posts and the continuous flow of information. It is important to understand how quickly Twitter moves. Unlike Facebook, tweets are not weighted based on interactions; they stream in real time, and can be pushed down a user's feed quickly. Twitter's hallmark is that posts are limited to 140 characters. It is remarkable how short that is and how much it can communicate.

What can be said in 140 characters or less?
- *Be the change you want to see in the world* – Mahatma Gandhi (62 characters)
- *Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that* – MLK (118 characters)
- *The care of human life & happiness & not their destruction, is the first & only legitimate object of good government* - Thomas Jefferson (138 characters)

Ideally, you'll get in the habit of being on Twitter periodically throughout the day or week. Do it on a smartphone or tablet when you're in line waiting to check out or on public transportation. Do it from your home computer during ads on *Mad Men*. It is okay to just get on for a few minutes and then hop back off. Don't feel like you have to catch up to where you were last time.

TWITTER GLOSSARY
- *Handle* – this is your user name that starts with "@." For example our handle is "@LWV"
- *Mentions* – you can use someone's handle in your tweet, and this will notify that user that you've mentioned them. If you start a tweet with an @mention, it'll only be seen by people who follow you and that user. If you want everyone who follows you to be able to see it, put a "." before the mention (for example ".@LWV")
- *RT – Retweet*. You can retweet other people's tweets to share with your followers. You can also ask your followers to retweet or share your tweet with their followers. Sometimes a retweet is prefaced with RT, sometimes it isn't. Unfortunately, there's no uniform way, so you'll just have to keep an eye out to see how others do it. If you use the RT button directly from Twitter, RT will not be added. This helps keep the character count down. If you use a third party application you generally have the option to add "RT." Some people will retweet and add their own thought at the beginning or end of the tweet.
- *MT – Modified Tweet*. Used in lieu of RT if the user has made some small edits to the original tweet. This is generally done when a user needs to delete a few characters from the tweet being retweeted to make room for commentary.
- *DM – Direct Message*. You can send private messages through Twitter by starting a tweet with "DM." This is a good way to share information with journalists or other users you're engaged with on Twitter if you don't want that information shared publicly. In order to send a DM you and the other user must already be following one another.
- *Lists* – You can create lists to help you manage who you follow, for example you could start lists for members, state partners, news sources, local journalists, national organizations, etc. These

lists can be public or private. You can follow other users' public lists, so that you don't have to individually follow each user. We have a list of the state and local Leagues we know of on Twitter, and we're also starting to put together a list for League staff and members. Let us know who we're missing on these lists!

WHAT TO TWEET

A great stat from a recent factsheet. An article on an issue you're working on (or better yet, quoted in). Your president or another LWV representative is attending a noteworthy event. Your new press statement.

All of these are great fodder for Twitter! Find a sentence or quote that encapsulates what you're sharing and use it as a teaser alongside a link to the resource and some relevant hashtags. Try to keep your tweets under the 140 character limit. By using 100-120 characters, you'll leave room for others to retweet you and add thoughts of their own.

You can also retweet other people's tweets that you like. This is a great way to acknowledge your members, partner organizations, journalists, bloggers, etc. And, they've already done the work for you – getting a thought under 140 characters, while probably including a link and hashtags! This is a good place to start when you're new to Twitter.

HASHTAGS

Hashtags are a way for your tweet to enter an ongoing conversation, or to create a new one. Hashtags start with "#," are all one word, and can contain only alphanumeric characters – symbols like "!" or "&" will end a hashtag. When you click on a hashtag, Twitter pulls a chronological list of all the tweets using that hashtag. That way, you don't have to follow all of the users tweeting about an event or issue, but can keep an eye on the hashtag to see everything that's being said. Save a search for a hashtag that you'll be monitoring frequently.

Using the right hashtags is a great way for our partner organizations, key opinion leaders, members of Congress and journalists to see our tweets (and resources) and know we are engaging on these issues using a multi-channel approach. This can also help bring in new followers who see we are engaged on issues they're following. Use Hashtags.org to research trending and relevant hashtags. When brainstorming your own, make sure to keep it short, so others can easily add it onto their tweets. Some hashtags you may frequently see include #tcot (top conservatives on Twitter) #p2 (progressives) #fem2 (feminists) and #sotu (state of the union).

#FF – Follow Friday. This is a hashtag used to recommend or thank others on Twitter every Friday. We use it to thank those who have retweeted or mentioned us the previous week. You can also use it to elevate your members or to highlight bloggers, journalists or other organizations that you think are doing good work. It can be a good way to initiate engagement with users you want to interact with or have follow you.

SHORTENED LANGUAGE

Understanding tweets can be difficult because users are forced to shorten language, using questionable grammar and spelling in order to get their thoughts under 140 characters. Some of the abbreviations will

be easier to understand, such as "b/c" for "because," "abt" for "about," or numbers and letters like "r," "u," "2," or "4" in lieu of the words they represent. Others that you may see include "ICYMI" for "in case you missed it" or "h/t" for "hat tip" which is a way to recognize or thank someone. If you need help deciphering this language, a quick Google search will usually provide an answer.

You don't need to partake in this type of communication, but you may find it helpful to use this shorthand sometimes.

WHO TO FOLLOW

Once you're signed up, you should be seeking out followers by following others. Follow the journalists and bloggers who cover your events and issues. Follow your partner organizations and their staff. In addition to following them, you can send a tweet directed to them, letting them know you're on Twitter and asking them to follow you back. You can ask organizations to welcome you to Twitter on their feeds and to ask their supporters to follow you. For those who help you out, make sure to repay the favor – give them some love on Follow Friday and tell your supporters what great work they do! You can also look at a hashtag that you know you'll be using a lot to see who is tweeting good information, and follow them. It can be hit and miss, and not everyone you follow will follow you back, but over time you should see your numbers tick up.

When you're near a big number, ask your followers to help you get there (We're at 92 followers RT this and help us get to 100 by the end of the day!). And, of course, thank those who help you reach your goal!

SHORT URLS

Twitter will automatically shorten all links posted using their own URL shortener. Other tools will provide you with more stats on your URLs, including number of clicks, stats on individual links or all of your links. Bit.ly offers the most comprehensive reports and can connect directly to your Twitter account or a third party application you may opt to use to manage your Twitter account. Short URLs are generally 20 characters or less.

THIRD-PARTY APPLICATIONS

Third-party tools like Tweetdeck or Hootsuite allow you to better manage your Twitter feed than directly through Twitter. These tools help you schedule tweets and track multiple searches, hashtags, and users at the same time. Hootsuite has its own short URL, but also allows you to use a short URL from an outside service, like bit.ly. Tweetdeck allows you to connect your bit.ly account directly through its platform. Both applications can be used to manage your Facebook account as well.

ANALYTICS

Tracking Twitter analytics can be tricky, and one free online service won't meet all your needs. We use and recommend Crowdbooster, which can track both your Twitter and Facebook accounts. Crowdbooster keeps track of your mentions, retweets, new followers, etc. In addition, it can provide you with feedback and tips on how to better engage, including best times to post.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT STEPHANIE DRAHAN – SDRAHAN@LWV.ORG

LWV **LWV of the US**
League of
Women Voters®
www.lwv.org
(@LWV) our handle

STATEMENT: Right to Vote Under Attack
bit.ly/Jz6nFe #voters #election #voterID
#votingrights #photoID

short URL,
we used
bit.ly

hashtags - 5 total in this tweet

← Reply 🗑 Delete ⭐ Favorite

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mention - we've "tagged" another user
by using their handle

TAKE ACTION - Join the million other
voices in asking @EPAgov to adopt strong
carbon standards! bit.ly/IoOhG2
#cleanair4kids

← Reply 🗑 Delete ⭐ Favorite