



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA

COVER SHEET FOR LEGISLATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - 2018 SESSION

NOTE: The responses to these questions are for the use of LWVFL only and will not be released to the media or the general public. Although space has been provided on the form, additional pages may be attached to allow room for answers.

Legislator's Name: _____ **H or S District** _____

Interviewer: _____ **Phone:** _____

Recorder: _____ **Phone:** _____

League of Women Voters of: _____

Please make sure the Legislator's name and appropriate district appear on each sheet.

A Guide to Conducting Legislative Interviews

1. Schedule your interview promptly. To set up an appointment, call the district office and make a request for a half-hour meeting with the Representative or Senator. It is possible that they will tell you there is no time during the recess but you should be persistent. If applicable, stress that you are a constituent. If you are unable to make an appointment with the legislator, make one with his/her aide. Very often aides are assigned specific topics and can be the real experts on an issue. The aide has great influence with the legislator, if you can get him or her on your side, it can be very helpful. However, in some offices, only the scheduler will make meeting appointments. Some offices might ask that you send a meeting request by fax or email.
2. Learn the background material. The Legislator will probably want to discuss the priority with you. This is also an opportunity to do some lobbying on LWVFL positions.
3. Know as much as possible about the person you are interviewing – party affiliation, committee assignments, position on the subject of the interview – as possible.
4. Two members should attend the interview, one to ask the questions, one to unobtrusively take notes. It is generally understood in League that members do not go to interviews alone. The responses should be written in final form immediately after the interview while your memory is fresh.
5. Be punctual.
6. Congratulate a returning legislator on re-election and a new legislator on his or her election.
7. Give the legislator a copy of LWVFL STATEMENT OF 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
8. **Again, inform your legislator that the results of these interviews are for our internal use only, and will not be released to the press or the general public.**
9. Confine your conversation as much as possible to LWVFL priorities. Express the League point of view, not your own. If a question is asked on a matter on which the LWVFL has no position, explain that LWVFL has no position because it has not been studied and consensus taken.
10. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know about a particular matter. Offer to find the answer and report back, and be sure to do so. This is a great opportunity for follow-up with your legislator.
11. Don't argue.
12. Ask follow-up questions if the answers are vague or nonspecific. **If the legislator wants to spend time lobbying you, gently try to keep him or her focused on our issues.**

13. Be aware of the time allotted by the legislator for this interview.
14. Thank the legislator for his or her time and let the legislator know that you are interested in a good working relationship and that you want to know how the League can assist the legislator.
15. Thank the legislator for any past assistance given with League priorities. Leave the legislator with a friendly feeling, even though you may disagree.
16. MAINTAIN THE CONTACT WHEN YOU GET HOME! Send a thank you note. Call or email their district office when you see good things, as well as when we want support or a vote.

9. Health Care: Given the uncertainty of the Affordable Health Care Act, and the probability that those states that did not expand Medicaid will get fewer dollars under the proposed health block grant system which is based on numbers enrolled in Medicaid, would you consider expanding Medicaid at this time? Please explain your reasons.

10. Health Care: As you know, when it comes to mental health funding Florida ranks 50th out of the 50 states. Do you support or oppose increased funding for mental health services including substance abuse, and why?