

## **LWVIL 2017 Issues Briefing: Consolidation of Governmental Entities**

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At the 2015 LWVIL Convention, members adopted a position to address the rising concern of redundant governmental entities. Illinois has the most layers of government than any other state. There has been significant activity on the state and local level to address this issue, however most changes must first occur in state law. The LWVIL position addresses the factors and process of consolidation or elimination of a governmental entity, thereby allowing advocacy and education in this area. Because this is a complex and highly politicized issue area, the Issues Committee approved the formation of an ad hoc committee made up of members from throughout the state. A call for participation was issued by the E-News and Leaders Update and two meetings of the group have been held.

The mission of this committee is to provide local support for the transparent and informed decision making behind consolidation of governmental entities and services, both to reduce the number of taxing bodies in our state and maintain needed government services. The League of Women Voters of Illinois, county and local Leagues are uniquely capable of facilitating these changes due to high level of credibility, community involvement and well balanced information. The committee made up of leaders will support local efforts in the following ways:

1. Survey local leagues about past and present actions taken locally to consolidate governmental entities and services to be completed by March, 2017;
2. Creating a clearinghouse of information garnered from the survey, the state report and Transform Illinois reports;
3. Provide a template and support for local League forums to educate stakeholders about legislative or administrative processes and potential outcomes from these actions;
4. Review and in some cases, take a position on proposed legislation, utilizing the LWVIL position, which focuses upon process and outcomes. Have specialists join the LWVIL Issues Committee to regularly report on legislative activity and outcomes.
5. Create written and digital educational materials for legislators, public servants, Leagues and governmental services.
6. Compile, maintain and disseminate a list of highly qualified speakers, with expertise in specific areas of government services and processes, to attend public forums, be part of a youtube series and write blogs.
7. Dedicate a specific area on the LWVIL website, and potentially a dedicated FB page, to this topic for statewide and national use.
8. Train and involve our Local members about this issue and assist them in recruiting stakeholders to study local government consolidation, leading to more visibility for the League and expand membership. The committee will provide a workshop at the 2017 LWVIL Convention and regionally thereafter.

LWVIL partnered with the statewide organization, Transform Illinois, attending its regular meetings for the last six months and signing on as an organization to one advisory letter to the leaders in Springfield in support of legislation as part of the Senate budget proposal to allow counties to consolidate within their own governmental organizations. Next steps in 2017 include compiling and sharing the results of the survey, establishing a section of the LWVIL web page for a clearinghouse of information and presenting a workshop at the 2017 LWVIL Convention providing a League toolbox for addressing this issue locally involving stakeholders and increasing League visibility and reach. Please advise LWVIL Issues Committee if local activities on this issue are taking place.