

# 2022 Lobby Corps Guide

Questions and answers for current and new Corps members.



## 1. *When is it advocacy vs lobbying?*

LWVUS tells us that **advocacy** encompasses pleading for or against causes, as well as supporting or recommending positions; **lobbying** is a specific advocacy technique. Lobbying is defined by LWVUS as an attempt to influence specific legislation, including both legislation that has already been introduced in a legislative body and specific legislative proposals that the League may oppose or support. Thus the work performed by **Lobby Corps** is considered lobbying. We are volunteer lobbyists; we are not required to register with the state if anyone should inquire.

## 2. *Who am I Lobbying?*

You will be presenting the League’s position on specific priorities with State Senators and State Representatives, and their legislative assistants. The Florida House of Representatives has 120 members; the Florida Senate has 40 members. They are assigned to various committees by the House Speaker and Senate President, respectively. You may be part of a team to meet with certain legislators individually, or you may present the League’s position before a Committee. You may perform your assignment in a courtyard, marching down Monroe Street, or work from the comfort of your home.

## 3. *Who covers Local and National Issues?*

The League operates at three distinct levels. Our Tallahassee **Lobby Corps** focuses exclusively on State of Florida Legislative Priorities. The National Lobby Corps works with the US Congress; and local Leagues address local Government issues.

## 4. *What is Speaking with one Voice?*

In the public arena, the League speaks with one consistent and non-partisan voice. League policy provides that the President/Spokesperson of the League is the **sole voice** of the League, except when another member has been officially designated to speak. Because our work is at the state League level, our sole voice for Legislative issues and the individual with the authority to designate another spokesperson is Cecile Scoon, State League President. No one speaks on behalf of the League without authorization.

## 5. *Who are my Cohorts?*

Lobby Corps takes direction from the State League Board and President, and is supported by the State League staff. You are joining an exceptional core team of over 40 professionals with many years of experience collectively in League Advocacy. At the Capitol Complex, at rallies, press conferences or marches you will meet and work alongside Coalition Partners & other Non-Profit Advocates who share our ideologies and positions. You will undoubtedly meet and be supported by **Capital Alliance Group (CAG)**, the League’s paid lobbying firm. Always spot on are their suggestions and advice.

### State Leaguers

- Cecile Scoon, Esq., LWVFL President
- Blake Summerlin, LWVFL Communications Manager, Lobby Tools App Manager
- Leah Nash, LWVFL Executive Director

- LWVFL Action/Issue Chairs <https://lwvfl.org/toolbox/toolbox/statewide-action-team-leaders/>

Tallahassee Chapter Leaguers:

- Trish Neely, Lobby Corps Chair; text **850.322.3317** or email [Neely.FamE@gmail.com](mailto:Neely.FamE@gmail.com)
- Christine Coble, LWVT Director and former Elected Official
- Dr. Sally Butzin, LWVT President and Education Chair
- Meta Calder, LWVT Director and Natural Resources/Solar Energy Chair
- Kathy Winn, LWVT Officer and Statewide Healthcare Issue Chair
- Jan Ru Bino, immediate past Lobby Corps Chair

Tallahassee CAG:

- Dr. Jeffrey Sharkey, CEO/President
- Lauren Gallo, Lobbyist and LWV League Member
- Isabella Nicolau, Lobbyist and LWV League Member

## **6. Where and when are Volunteer opportunities presented?**

The State Strategy Team meets every Friday to review the following week's schedule. This includes any Action/Issue Chairs that have bills scheduled to be heard in Committee, our Lobbyists, Lobby Corps Chair, State League President, and State League Staff.

**By late Friday/early Saturday the Lobby Corps Chair distributes by email** a list of bills of interest that are being heard the following week, as well as any known press conferences or other advocacy events that need volunteers to stand and represent the League. The Lobby Corps Chair will be working the weekend to secure coverage from Lobby Corps volunteers. Once you receive the schedule, decide which committee(s) you are able to attend or monitor from home the following week; also any special events you can join. To volunteer, text or email the Lobby Corps Chair.

## **7. I am new to Lobby Corps and want to *Ease In* - What are my Options?**

- Volunteer to rally or stand in solidarity with an LWV sign or pin - usually these events are held in the courtyard between the two Capitols or in front of the Old Capitol.
- March and carry signs - often from one of our campuses to the Capitol
- Volunteer to monitor bills in a Committee from Home. Watch live or view the recording; answer and submit the debrief questionnaire.
- Respond to Action Alerts that ask for emails to be sent. Text and email addresses are always provided within the content of the Action Alert. Easy-peasy.
- When you volunteer for in person activities, you won't be alone until you say you are ready, and we agree.

## **8. I just want to Tag Along and Observe - is that possible?**

Yes! When you receive the email listing next week's bills, identify dates and times of interest and text or email the Lobby Corps Chair. You will be teamed with the appropriate volunteer(s). You may agree to meet or ride together.

## **9. What is parking like Downtown?**

Parking in any downtown area can be very challenging. As a general rule, it's easier to find parking early morning or late afternoon. Organizational "lobby days" can bring in visitors from around the state, as can controversial legislation.

Available street parking downtown is at a premium, but there are metered spaces throughout the downtown area with varied timeframes: 1, 2, 3 and 4 hour maximums - meters are free after 6PM.

Meters take change; however payment can be made by credit card through the **Park Mobile system**. Download the app to your smart phone.

Parking Meter Rates	
15 min	\$0.25
30 min	\$0.50
45 min	\$0.75
1 hour	\$1.00

[ParkMobile Parking App | Contactless Payments - On-street & Reservation.](#)

There are also several parking lots and garages. The following link shows various downtown parking locations: [talgov tallahassee - Bing Maps.](#)

- My favorite parking spot because it is inexpensive, always available, and a nice walk on a cool day is on North Bronough Street directly across from the Leon County Public Library's delivery bay doors (it is the Juror parking area). It can be entered from Bronough heading south -- enter from the right lane right after you pass West Call Street; or from Martin Luther King Blvd heading south-- enter from the left lane after you pass West Call Street. ( **\$2 all day**) It takes credit cards and quarters.
- My spot if I am running late, not up for a long walk, or will be downtown four hours or less is the metered street parking on North Calhoun. Often, I can pull into a spot as soon as I cross Apalachee Pkwy (27); if not, it's metered the whole way around the Dept of Corrections. (**\$1-\$4** plus transaction fee)
- My spot if I will be downtown all day and potentially past sunset is the Garage under Kleman Plaza; I am less brave after dark and like to walk where pedestrian traffic will be higher. The garage can be entered from Duval Street or South Bronough Street—both streets are one-way, Duval heading north, Bronough heading south. (\$2 for 1 hour, \$1 for each additional hour; or **\$7 all day**) Kiosks take credit cards.

### **10. What do I need to know about Capitol Complex Security?**

It is usually faster to gain entry through the House or Senate as most visitors and tour groups use the Capitol entrance. Sensors check for metal in clothing; purses, laptops, briefcases, bags, are placed on a conveyor belt and screened. It's similar to airport screening but not as intrusive and friendlier. League buttons and nametags with magnets will set off the alarm. An anti-riot bill was passed in 2021 to authorize crowd control measures, including the use of dogs on the grounds during rallies, press conferences and other advocacy events at the Capitol Complex.

### **11. How do I prepare for monitoring bills from Home?**

All legislative meetings are broadcast on the Florida Channel [Home - The Florida Channel](#); they are also streamed live from the Senate <https://www.flsenate.gov/> and the House <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/> websites; recordings are also available from all listed sites.

1. I usually read the staff analysis for each bill we support/oppose so I understand the basics. It makes following along and note taking much easier.
2. Keep handy a copy of the debrief form so you know what to be listening for and taking notes about.
3. The **Committee Agenda** lists all bills to be heard and their approximate order. The Chair generally follows this published order, but changes are inevitable.
4. In terms of procedure in Committee, think Robert's Rules of Order. For each bill heard,
  - a. The Chair recognizes the bill sponsor who presents a summary,
  - b. Amendments are read, considered, and voted up or down
  - c. Legislators are recognized to ask questions of the bill's sponsors,
  - d. The public is recognized to speak in support or opposition to the bill and/or any amendments
  - e. The Chair moves to debate and recognizes legislators to debate (expect pontification!)
  - f. The vote is called and recorded by the Secretary
5. If you miss something, you can always view the recording later.

6. Complete the Legislative Debriefing Form while events are fresh in your mind and email to [neely.fame@gmail.com](mailto:neely.fame@gmail.com).

## **12. Remind me what are the questions I am answering?**

The following twelve questions are to be answered for each bill assigned:

1. Your Name
2. Date/Time of Meeting
3. House or Senate Committee Name
4. Bill # (and Companion bill #)
5. Subject of the Bill/Amendment
6. Names of other LWV representatives present if known
7. Final Action in Committee on the Bill or Amendment
8. Were any Legislator's comments made in support or opposition to the League's position that are worth noting for continued advocacy efforts? Try to identify the member's(s') name(s) beside your comments.
9. Were any audience comments made in support or opposition to the League's position that should be noted? Try to identify speaker's name and organization.
10. Roughly how many speakers were for and against the bill?
11. Do you have any comments on this legislation yourself?
12. Is any follow-up needed (request from press, another organization, or a legislator/staff)? If so, please explain:

## **13. How do I prepare for in person Committee Events?**

### ***In advance,***

1. Locate your LWV button, scarf, Vote Pin, Vote mask, or LWV t-shirt or sweater - any item of clothing with stars and stripes works well.
2. Become familiar with the House and Senate websites. There's a trove of useful information that I am constantly accessing from my iPhone and PC.
3. Pull up the Committee on the website and note the chair and members (to identify by sight since placards are not always easy to see in the room); I also look up the bill sponsor(s).
4. Review the **Committee Agenda** so you know approximately when our bill(s) of interest will be heard. I usually read the staff analysis for each bill we support/oppose so I understand the basics. It makes following along and note taking much easier.
5. Secure a clean copy of the debrief form so you can write/type during the meeting. In Committee, you will see people with laptops and others with pen and paper - do what is comfortable for you.
6. **If testifying**, practice your script and assure you can recite or read one version within one minute, and a longer version in three minutes. If it is your first time, the Lobby Corps Chair will provide your script and guide you.
7. Know where you plan to park and a back up spot just in case your preferred lot or spot is full.

### ***The day of,***

1. Collect your mask - no blatant advocacy messages are permitted in committee rooms.
2. Collect your League buttons, etc. Note: the big buttons with magnets set off security alarms so I usually keep in my briefcase or purse until I go through security.
3. Dress comfortably but professionally; at all times be respectful and courteous. The League is one of the most respected grassroots organizations in the country so represent us well.
4. Be sure to leave home for the Capitol in plenty of time to get parked or catch the shuttle (runs 1/11 to 3/11/22), get through security, and arrive at the Committee Room. The security lines are usually shorter at the entrances of the Senate and House office buildings. They may be longer at the main Capitol entrance because of student groups, tours, etc. It is important that you arrive 30 minutes early to the committee room as seating is limited to one-third of usual capacity due to pandemic protocols.

5. If it's your first time, a seasoned Leaguer will meet you outside the Committee room or you may decide to ride together.
6. When you arrive at your committee room, you will complete and submit to one of the Sergeant's staff, an appearance form for each bill you are there to represent. The forms are typically on a table near the door.
7. The Chair generally follows the **published order of bills** to be taken up; however, expect last minute changes. Bills may be pulled if not enough votes to pass. Bill sponsors' attendance may be delayed by conflicting meetings. Last minute amendments may be filed and taken up.
8. Expect the unexpected. Avoid the drama or passion of fellow advocates or other interested citizens. The Chair and Sergeant's at Arms maintain order and proper decorum; violators are swiftly removed.
9. If you miss something, you can always view the recording later.

#### 14. How do I complete an Appearance Form?

Each branch of government has its own form, they are not interchangeable. At left is the Senate's form; the House form is similar. Fill in all blanks.

You are representing the League of Women Voters of Florida (the old form requested that information).

You are either **Speaking** OR **Waiving** (not both). Make sure you indicate our position: for or against.

When asked on the form, you are not a registered lobbyist, and you are not receiving anything of value.

Note: **Each bill** requires its own completed form.

#### 15. If "Speaking" for the League, what can I expect?

Committees follow Robert's Rules of Order with the Committee Chair controlling **all** aspects of the meeting. Some Chairs are a marvel of efficiency and committees run smoothly and fairly; others, not so much. **The Chair will invite public comment AFTER the bill's sponsor introduces the bill and/or any amendments and the Committee Members have asked their questions.** During public testimony the Chair will call speakers by name. Generally the Chair will alternate speakers by those speaking in support and opposition. The Chair will announce how much time speakers will be given. Some Chairs will cut speakers off when time to speak has elapsed so be sure you have your prepared remarks timed for one minute and three minutes. You are welcome to have a longer version, but rarely will you have the opportunity to use it in Committee. It may come in handy for Press Conferences.

When called, immediately approach the lectern. Wait for the Chair to acknowledge you and then speak from your prepared remarks. The Chair or other Committee Members may ask a question. You may answer if you know the answer. Or defer - tell the questioner you will have a subject matter expert or League President Cecile Scoon contact him/her with answers. Immediately or as soon as possible send email or text to Lobby Corps Chair with details.

Legislative debate and the Committee vote follow public testimony. Some bills are voted up or down with little fanfare; others elicit passionate debate, often along party lines. Senate debates tend to be more respectful of opposing members than House debates; however both chambers can get pretty snarky! Committee Chairs work hard to keep members' comments directed to the bill and not the sponsor(s) or the other party.

## **16. What if I don't have prepared remarks?**

If you have volunteered to speak on behalf of the League, the Lobby Corps Chair **will assure** you have prepared remarks. Action/Issue Chairs provide talking points which become concise remarks to be read or spoken on behalf of the League. Words are chosen carefully to be firm but not confrontational or partisan, and to clearly raise key points in a few short paragraphs. Personal stories hold sway with legislators.

## **17. When "Waiving" on a Bill what happens in Committee?**

At the conclusion of all public **testimony**, the Chair will read into the record Appearance Forms where testimony is waived. The Chair will read out your name and state your position - support or oppose. Sometimes the Chair may call your name and look for you. If that happens, just stand up, state your name, and say, "**On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Florida, I waive my time to speak in support (or in opposition) to the bill.**" Then sit down and the Chair will move to the next person. If the Committee is running out of time, the Chair may not read aloud all the forms (which is disappointing), but they are still part of the public record.

## **18. What if I am asked questions after the Hearing?**

After the meeting, should you get any questions from legislators or the press and you do not feel confident in your answer, refer them to Cecile Scoon [cecile@lwvfl.org](mailto:cecile@lwvfl.org). Get their name, organization they represent, and let Cecile know to expect contact. Don't be surprised if some of our coalition partners or league supporters introduce themselves to you. You are likely to see them again - I enjoy meeting and networking with like-minded individuals.

## **19. Can I speak or waive on an item that is not a League Priority?**

You may appear before any Committee representing your own views; or any press conference or other event. The LWV encourages your involvement in government, just be sure you are not wearing anything that identifies you with the League. If you are a known Leaguer, be sure to clearly announce that you are representing yourself - your comments do not represent the views or opinions of the League.

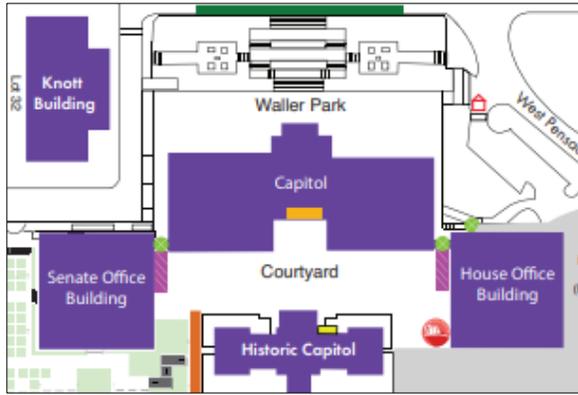
## **20. I am a paper-person, where can I secure copies of Committee Agendas, Bills, etc.?**

You can print these items out at home before you go to the Capitol, but it will be a *lot* of printing! Each branch of government has a website. Alternatively, the House and Senate each have their own Documents Office, both located on the third floor of the Capitol but on opposite sides of the building. The Senate Documents Office is called the "Service Center." Here are some of the documents available:

- The published calendar for the day (has all meetings listed, any new bills filed in each house, the order of business to be taken up if either house is meeting in full session that day, etc.);
- The meeting packet for each Committee, plus any last minute bill amendments not in the packet. The packet includes a Staff Analysis for each bill.
- A list of members of each house with their room numbers, phone numbers, etc.;
- The previous day's journal--they are free and informative.

## **21. How do I maneuver the Committee Rooms in the Capitol Complex?**

Committee Meetings occur in the large meeting rooms in the House Office Building (HOB), the Senate Office Building (SOB) or the Knott Building. There are glassed-in walkways to each building, so you never have to leave the Capitol Complex and reenter through security.



The walkways from the Capitol to the House Office Building are on the second and third floors; walkways from the Capitol to the Senate Office Building are on the second, third and fourth floors. There is only one walkway to the Knott Building which is accessed on the second floor of the Capitol and comes out on the fourth floor of the Knott Building (different elevations).

The House and Senate hallways can feel labyrinthine; if you get turned around, just step into an office and ask someone for directions.

The committee rooms are moderately easy to find - often you can follow the crowd.

## **22. Is there a trick to using the Capitol Building core elevators?**

There are fourteen elevators in the rotunda and behind the rotunda. Two special elevators run between the Lower Level and the fourth floor. The remaining twelve elevators are known as the **Elevator Bank**. Select your floor from one of two free-standing elevator selection boxes in the rotunda; then listen for the elevator to chime alerting you it is ready for you to board - your floor will automatically be selected. Remember there are elevators in the rotunda and behind the rotunda so move quickly to locate the one that chimed for you. The up/down arrow atop the elevator will be blinking and the door will be open.

## **23. Is there a place to relax or grab a quick bite?**

When you need a break or food, here are some suggestions. The Capitol Cafeteria is located on the Lower Level of the Capitol Building. A snack bar with drinks, sandwiches and other packaged foods is on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Capitol. And when you just need to sit down, get away, and have peace and quiet, go to the Secretary of State's library on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, front of the building. There are tables there for working, also a few easy chairs. There are also computers for public use should you need one and the staff is very pleasant and helpful.

There are also downtown restaurants within walking distance. Of course your return will mean rescreening through security.

## **24. Help - Now what do I do?**

Despite our endless planning sometimes life happens. Be as creative as you can under the circumstances; never put yourself in harms way. As soon as possible alert the Lobby Corps Chair, there may still be time for plan B. All of the following have happened to me through my Lobby Corps years; you are sure to add to the list!

- Traffic is overwhelming and you are not going to arrive on time
- No available parking can be found because of a downtown march
- You calendared the hearing on the wrong day and missed it
- There's a torrential down pour and you are stuck in your car with no protective gear
- You left your prepared remarks on the shuttle
- A discourteous driver barreled through a large puddle, and you are soaked to the bone and dirty
- There are no available seats in committee, and you are there to testify

## **25. When the day is done . . .**

Thank you for your hard work on behalf of the League; your volunteerism is essential to our mission. If you want to chat, vent, ask questions, share feedback, or confirm future activities you may text or email the Lobby Corps Chair. At 9PM the iPhone goes into **do not disturb** mode so make contact earlier if you want a same day response.

Don't forget to complete your debriefing form while events are still fresh in your mind; submit when completed to [Neely.FamE@gmail.com](mailto:Neely.FamE@gmail.com). They will be shared with our Lobbyists and Action/Issue Chairs.

## **26. When is it Capitol vs Capital?**

- ✓ Tallahassee is Florida's **Capital** city
- ✓ If case sensitive, be sure to use **capital** letters when applicable
- ✓ If I was a paid lobbyist, I would have plenty of **capital**!
- ✓ Lobby Corps activities occur at the **Capitol** Complex - I have seen it referred to as the **Capital** Complex, but that is inaccurate
- ✓ I prefer the old **Capitol** building to the new **Capitol** building
- ✓ It may be called the **Capitol** Report (referring to what is going on around the complex), or the **Capital** Report (referring to what is going on in our Capital City).