**OBSERVER CORP GUIDELINES**

**What is the Observer Corps and what is its function within the League?**

Observer Corps members attend council, board, commission, and advisory committees to listen, learn, observe, and report back to the League with factual information about the proceedings and any information about which the Board may be interested. In particular, the Observer calls the League Board’s attention to community and public policy issues that the League may wish to act/testify on based on League Position Statements. Observers also identify trends or problems for possible future study and action by the League. Observers’ reports will be available on the LWV-K website and in our monthly newsletter The Voter.

**Does being an Observer help League?**

Yes! “Observers keep elected and appointed officials on notice; they let them know that someone is watching what decisions are being made and how they are being made.” The League believes that the presence of Observers helps keep government entities attentive to their jobs, with the proper respect for doing the public’s business, and promotes transparency and accountability. If something of concern does take place, the Observer should talk with the Observer Corps Chair or a member of the League Board about it immediately so that League can testify or ask questions in a timely way.

The first reason for observing public meetings is to watch their general operations. What issues are being discussed and how is the meeting being conducted? Does the agency comply with the open meeting laws?

The second reason for observing public meetings is to watch for issues on which the League should be taking action - speaking out. If an item that is being discussed is related to one of LWV-K positions then include that in your report. We'll look into it and see whether it's something that the League should be speaking out on.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, observing makes a statement that the community is watching the process of government. The League observer is the representative of the public at these meetings.

**What are the rules for Observers?**A key rule is that Observers **do not speak or participate in the meeting being observed**. Observers are the eyes and ears of the League Board, but are never the Voice of the League. Observers maintain an impartial, respectful, and professional attitude. The Observer must not pursue personal interests at the meetings or use information obtained from outside sources to discuss or give an opinion about an issue discussed at the meeting. One may not “step out of the observer role” before or after a meeting. It is OK to ask a simple question for clarification (e.g., checking on a date or a term), or to ask how to obtain further information on a topic, after the meeting

**Will this board know who I am and what I am doing there?**

The Observer should introduce her/himself at the first meeting the Observer attends. After that the Observer will be a part of the audience only.

**How am I identified at the meeting?**

The Observer will wear an LWV-Kitsap name tag at every meeting you attend. It should be visible to all if you wear it on your lapel. On zoom meetings you should rename yourself to signify your role as Your Name LWV \_\_\_\_Observer

**What if I am asked a question?**

If asked, your answer to every question is that you are a League of Women Voters’ Observer. You attend these meetings to follow the activities of this agency, but not to speak.

**Does a League Observer ever testify before that board?**

No. Only the “Voice of the League”, the President, or a designated member of the Executive Committee may attend a meeting and testify, based on League positions concerning issues under discussion.

**How to submit your report?**

Visit lwv-kitsap.org and go to the Advocacy tab at the top and scroll down to Observer Corp. There you will find a form to complete and submit. Your completed form will be sent to the chair of the Observer Corp for review. The form will then be posted on our website for members to view.