NOTES

POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 9, 2008
555 N. Wabasha Street
4th Floor Boardroom
St. Paul, Minnesota, 55102
8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Members present: John Adams, David Alden, Vic Bloomfield, Jim Boyle, Buzz Cummins, John DeSantis, Bright Dornblaser, Paul Gilje, Scott Halstead, Dave Hutcheson, Nick Leitheiser
Staff present: Bob DeBoer, Victoria Ford, Annie Levenson-Falk, Rebecca McDonald
Outcomes:

- Determine course of action to begin member-led policy groups
- Identify policy engagement alternatives
- Identify resources for final push on Regional Policy Workshop attendance

1. **Review and approve agenda and outcomes. (8:05 – 8:10 a.m.)**

- A brief discussion took place about how one of the outcomes mentions "member-led" groups, and how all groups are member-led. It was agreed that "member-led" is not the right term.

- It was suggested that a brief recap of the final decisions of study proposals recommended to the Board be made. The recap highlighted the Charter Schools and Alternative Energy short-term group proposals.

- It was also clarified that advancement groups are convened irregularly to track what is going on with a specific issue and engage members about the issue.

2. **Discuss how Citizens League should proceed with member-led policy groups and determine next steps. (8:10 – 9:00 a.m.)**

- The meeting was prefaced with a declaration that the discussion will primarily focus on staff involvement, procedures and feedback about process.

- **Primary question**: Should the Citizens League attempt to organize small groups that will look at policy areas that we do not have a policy history in? This would be in addition to our short-term policy groups that look at historic work and see if is relevant or can be updated to the current context. Instant Runoff Voting (IRV) is an example of a policy area that would be very timely to look at now, but when we looked at our policy history we were not able to find a strong connection.

- No more than two study committees are planned in one year, but consideration of advancement groups -- for example, on Immigration and Higher Education – needs to also be given. The variety of topics allowed by this type of group would provide an opportunity for the League to be more active and it would challenge our members.

- It was mentioned to revisit the structure of the youth leadership group Annie led, and provide them with a variety of CL issues that they could focus on. It allowed us to bring in new members and build capacity. Their projects were successful, such as the environmental education initiative that built a rain garden, but we need to offer more alignment with Citizens League policy areas for future efforts.

- We could identify some key legislative issues during the upcoming session in '09, and break out into smaller advancement groups or citizen lobbyist groups, but keep the Policy Advisory Committee as the core group. Meetings could take place monthly during the year, and bring in the speaker of the house for breakfast, a bill author. This has been done in the past, and they were very well attended. The workload fell on one staff person, so it would have to be more volunteer-driven than staff-driven now.

- We must be cautious about doing things like the good 'ole days. Committees like this one sound great, but we are struggling with current implementation.

- The committee decided that we should not venture into short-term groups where we don't have a policy history at this time. We have enough areas to work on now where we do have a policy history and where we are making recommendations to the board. Small groups where we don't have a policy history might be populated with advocates of one position or another and might not meet Citizens League guidelines.

3. **Discuss and suggest other alternatives/additions to monthly meetings to engage more people in policy work. (9:00 – 9:10 a.m.)**
   - Agreed not to discuss due to time constraints.

4. **Regional Policy Workshop Update and Publicity. (9:10 – 9:25 a.m.)**
   - The update was very brief.

5. **Evaluate whether outcomes were achieved. (9:25 – 9:30 a.m.)**
   - Mostly 4's, with a 6 and a few 5's. It was expressed that this was a difficult meeting to evaluate, and the expectations exceeded the time allocation.