In 2014, our Action Committee presented a "how to" primer on taking action. In League, action can be anything from making a phone call to testifying at a hearing and everything in between. Here is some of their information on getting started.

**League of Women Voters – Action 101**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Meade

**Educate. Advocate. Reform.**These three words summarize the tenets of the League of Women Voters. And Action is how League members advocate for League positions at the local, state and national levels. Action is political, but it is not based on a political party or a specific candidate.

Action can be as simple as signing a petition or as involved as giving testimony at a public hearing. What follows is a list of actions that League members can take based on their time commitment and comfort level.

**1. Sign a petition**

Signing a petition is one of the easiest actions. Petitions are circulated at various venues, including farmers’ markets, street fairs, meetings, churches, door-to-door, and on-line. All they require of you is a signature and contact information.

**2. Fill out and mail a pre-printed card**

Some organizations print postcards asking legislators to take a position on an issue. These postcards are then distributed at various locations. All you need to do is sign, address, and stamp the postcard, and then mail it to your legislator.

**3. Respond to a LWV Action Alert on-line message**
Both the state and national Leagues send Action Alerts to members. These alerts request members to take action on specific issues on which the League has taken a position. You can sign up at www.lwv.org (national) and www.lwvmn.org (state) to receive alerts directly, although the LWV South Tonka Action Chair receives all the alerts and forwards them to our members. Action Alerts clearly state the requested action and provide contact information. When you respond to an Action Alert you do it as an individual citizen unless the alert specifically asks that you state your League affiliation. (Note: A League member can initiate an Action Alert but it must be coordinated with LWVMN. The procedure is detailed in the LWV South Tonka Action Policy.)

**4. Make a phone call to a government official**

Government officials receive phone calls from constituents on many topics. When you call, you may be asked your name, if you’re a constituent, and where you live. Depending on who you’re calling, you may speak with the official or you may speak with an intern. Always be polite and clear about what you’re requesting of the official.

**5. Write a letter via email or regular mail to an editor or government official**

Writing letters to publications and government officials is another form of action. Letters should be short, focused on one issue, and clearly written. Letters to legislators can be sent via email or regular mail. Publications generally provide guidelines for publishing letters. Tips for writing Letters to the Editor and Op-eds can be found at www.lwvmn.org under Member Resources/Democracy Reform: Education and Advocacy.

**6. Attend government/public meetings and hearings**

When an issue that’s important to you is being discussed at a government hearing or public meeting, it’s important for you to attend even if you won’t be speaking. Your presence shows support, and lets others know there are people concerned about the issue. Types of meetings and hearings include:

a. City council or county commission meetings
b. State legislative hearings, like the MN Senate Judiciary Committee or MN House Elections Committee
c. Other public hearings, which are held on local and state levels, like a local park commission meeting or the MN Public Utilities Commission (PUC) hearing

**7. Lobby/meet with city, county or state government officials**

Lobbying is just meeting with a government official to discuss an issue. You should call the official to schedule an appointment. Since the official may not be familiar with your issue, take materials on the topic that you can leave. Plan to go with one or two other people for support.

**8. Give public testimony**

Public testimony given as a League member must be coordinated with LWVMN. However, you can also give public testimony as a private citizen. Some meetings are opportunities to educate attendees, giving facts and explaining arguments. Others are opportunities to make emotional appeals, like showing a photo of your granddaughter while speaking about environmental damage to our water. To give testimony as a private citizen, you will probably have to sign up ahead of time.