

Legislative Survey Results Yield Opportunity for New Directions

Junior League of St. Louis members were surveyed at the 2005 Placement Day about legislative issues, advocacy, and the efforts of the League to influence public policy.

Among the survey results:

- Approximately 58 percent of those surveyed are familiar with PIC/SPAC (now known as the State Legislative Issues Committee or SLIC)
- One-half of those surveyed regard informing the membership of public issues as the top priority for SLIC, with only one regarding it as the lowest priority.
- Over one-third of those surveyed regarded influencing legislation as a SLIC priority.
- Survey respondents regarded guest speakers as the most interesting action that SLIC could pursue, with ed series ranked as the second most interesting action members could participate in.
- Lobby Day was regarded as the least interesting activity that SLIC could provide.
- The overwhelming majority of respondents support influencing legislation and communication with public officials, citing the JLSL mission, the League role in the community, and the need for a voice for women, children, families, and health.

Members were also asked in the survey to rank public issues, to determine the JLSL focus for developing positions and platforms. The issues offered for consideration in the survey were: domestic violence, foster/adoptive care, education, women's health, immunization, homelessness, health care, and opportunity for write-in (e.g. tobacco use prevention). The feedback provided was used by SLIC to develop position papers for the review, consideration, and approval by the Board. Members will be asked to vote, in final, on the JLSL position topics in the fall, using the knowledge and information provided from the position papers.

The Board and the membership are being asked to consider topic areas from the survey that are supportable by the whole of the membership, keeping in mind that certain issues are or can be divisive (e.g. women's health/reproductive health). Further, every effort is being made to ensure that the position topics are reflective of the Junior League mission and the community programs the Junior League of St. Louis supports or seeks to support.

Lastly, survey results indicated some concern about the legality of the Junior League, as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, to lobby/advocate on public policy issues. It is perfectly legal for a non-profit to lobby, with some restrictions. Organizations that file a 501(h) with the Internal Revenue Service have more lobbying flexibilities. The Junior League is exploring such a filing. In the meantime, no laws have been or are violated by the advocacy efforts of the Junior League.

SLIC looks forward to working with the membership for the coming year, to strengthen our commitment to legislative activities and increase our understanding of the public policy issues that impact on the community in which we live and work. SLIC will

endeavor to address the suggestions and priorities illustrated in the survey results. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Lorinda Daniel Moore, SLIC Chair, at 314-822-2819 or via email at ldmoore70@aol.com.