

League of Women Voters of Nashville

Nonpartisan Political Policy for Board Members

(May 1995; revised June 30, 2012)

Members of the League of Women Voters have realized since the organization's founding in 1920 that a complete understanding and careful balance of practice of nonpartisanship would be required to successfully accomplish our goals. In order for our members, who may hold allegiance to various political parties, to pursue and work for the same things, we must as an *organization* neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office.

However, the League is a political organization and as such encourages its members to participate fully in the party of their choice. It is an advantage to the League to have politically active members, as well as members whose paid employment is in the political arena.

Our goal is to ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization. Directors must recognize that as a result of close identification with the League, each has a special responsibility to make sure that their activities do not create a partisan impression. Conflicts of interest will need to be addressed by the Nashville Board of Directors within the guidelines of this nonpartisan political policy.

Directors are encouraged to fulfill their responsibility to become informed about candidates, attend precinct meetings and caucuses, and exercise their franchise. Directors may make non-conspicuous (i.e., not identified or affiliated as a League Director) contributions to a political party or candidate. Directors, acting as individuals and not representatives of the LWVN, also may host parties or rallies for political candidates. Attendance at such events is encouraged but Directors should not identify themselves as a LWVN board member at partisan events.

Directors may serve on governmental commissions at their own discretion. If the appointment is League-related, the appointee should be fully aware of the League positions as they relate to the commission's responsibilities.

Directors planning to engage in political activity must seek a board decision concerning how that activity would affect the community's perception of the League's nonpartisanship. If board approval is withheld, the director may choose to resign or take a leave of absence from the board for the duration of the activity. Public notices released by the League announcing the resignation or leave of absence of a board member must be carefully worded to avoid appearance of endorsement of that member's or any other candidacy.

The President and Voter Service Director (due only to possible participation organizing Debates or Forums) may not take an active visible role in a campaign for a political candidate.

Directors representing the League in the community should be sensitive to their responsibilities. When acting as League representatives, partisanship must not be discernible.

Directors may not identify themselves as publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a League position on an issue.

Political activities of a spouse or relative of a director are considered as separate and distinct from the activities of the director.

THESE GUIDELINES SHOULD BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY BY THE LWVN BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Examples for Understanding LWVN Nonpartisan Political Policy for Board Members

(From the June 30, 2012 Retreat Training)

Permitted Activities for Board Members

- Publically support a referendum or resolution
- Manage or serve as spokesperson for a political campaign (as an individual, but **NOT** as a LWVN director/representative)
- Urge registered voters to vote in elections
- Post yard signs at your home
- Volunteer in a political campaign
- Donate money to a political campaign (without stating League affiliation)
- Attend caucuses and meetings of political parties
- Make phone calls for a political campaign
- Serve as an officer or board member of a PAC that publically supports a candidate
- Be included on an official host list for a political campaign
- Accept appointment to governmental board or commission
- Hold a political fundraiser in your house/office
- Attend a political fundraiser or rally
- Vote

Unpermitted Activities for Board Members

- League identification at partisan events
- Tell your spouse/partner not to post yard signs
- Endorse referendums or resolutions in the name of Nashville League
- Engage in campaigning while poll watching
- Tell your spouse/partner not to take an active role in a political campaign
- Use LWV letterhead when making a political contribution
- Run for elected office
- Endorse a candidate on behalf of the Nashville League