



Nonpartisan and Non-League Involvement Policies

Excerpted from the LWVWA Education Fund and LWVWA Policies and Procedures, Updated February 2024

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to protect the credibility of the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) as an organization that does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Only to the extent that the public and its elected officials are convinced of the League's genuine impartiality toward candidates for elective office will the League be able to render effective voter service activities and gain a wide base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote the informed and active participation of citizens in government. This means the League does not support or oppose candidates for public office and acts only on issues chosen by the membership for action following study and consensus. Because political parties are integral to the American system of government and participation of informed citizens is beneficial to the political parties and to the system, the League encourages its members as individuals to be active in the political process, including political parties.

However, some positions within LWVWA are publicly prominent, such that partisan political engagement could be seen as being part of LWVWA's work, rather than solely individual activity; and for that reason, the following policy adds clarification of LWVWA expectations for those positions. This policy applies to both the 501(c)(3) Education Fund and the 501(c)(4) organization.

Responsibilities

Board of Directors.

1. Members of the LWVWA Board of Directors, except for those listed below, may be politically active, including within political parties, but must make it clear that they are participating as individuals and not on behalf of the League of Women Voters.
2. Exceptions include the President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Voter Services Director/Chair, Advocacy Director and Lobby Team Chair. Because of their prominent roles in LWVWA they may not participate in any partisan political activity, including campaign donations and partisan donations to organizations.
3. No LWVWA Board members may run for office because that could give the perception of LWVWA support for a candidate.
4. Board members shall not indicate their political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, including social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify them as members of the LWVWA Board.

LWVWA Lobby Team

1. Members of the LWVWA Lobby Team have a responsibility to work with the Legislature strictly on the basis of approved League positions and are authorized to speak for the League. Because they prominently represent LWVWA, they may not participate in any partisan political activity, including making campaign donations, or run for office.
2. Members of the LWVWA Lobby Team may send donations or volunteer on partisan campaigns outside of the state of Washington.

Political Activities of Spouses

The political activities of a spouse of a LWVWA Board member are to be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the Board member. However, if a spouse of the LWVWA President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Voter Services Director/Chair, Advocacy Director, Lobby Team Chair or Lobby Team member runs for office, this may be publicly construed as LWVWA support for a candidate and is prohibited. If a spouse of a member holding one of these prominent positions runs for office, the member must resign from their position.

Social Media

Board members and Lobby Team members shall not indicate their political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, including social networking sites or other public venues, that also prominently identify them as a member of the LWVWA Board or Lobby Team. An example of a social media disclaimer is “The postings on this site are my own and are not intended to represent League of Women Voters of Washington positions, strategies, or opinions.”

Specific Questions

Where the foregoing policies do not resolve the question of nonpartisanship, Board members and those representing the League should present questions about specific situations to the President or the state Board in the manner prescribed in the LWVWA Conflict Resolution policy.