

## **NONPARTISAN POLICY**

- A. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to protect the credibility of the League of Women Voters of Washington 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 towards 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.
- B. 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 League does not support or oppose candidates for public office and acts only on issues chosen by the membership for study and action. The League believes that political parties are essential to the American system of government and participation of informed citizens is beneficial to the political parties and to the system. Consequently, the League encourages its members as individuals to be active in the political parties, in finding and supporting candidates for public office and in seeking election to public office.
- C. Elected Office: The president, the advocacy portfolio director and voter service portfolio director shall not run for nor hold any elective office. Other board members may not run for, nor hold state elective office, but may run for local office if such an office is nonpartisan by definition and after consultation with the state board and the local Leagues involved. If the state board or the local League objects to the board member running for that office the board member may accept such counsel or resign from the board in order to seek public office. The reason for this provision is that such conflict affects performance of the state officer involved. The same policy applies to those who represent the president, who speak for the League such as issue chairs who testify in the legislature in an official capacity. They will not be party officers or run for a partisan office. Or make campaign or political party donations
- D. Political Party Office: The president, the advocacy portfolio director, and the voter service portfolio director, and the members of the state Board of Directors may not serve in an officer position in a political party. This includes serving as a Precinct Committee Officer. Board members are discouraged from any visible partisan party activity.
- E. Political Campaigns: The president, the advocacy portfolio director and the voter services? Portfolio director may not participate in any partisan political activity during their term of office on the state board because they are highly visible leaders who must embody the principle of the nonpartisan policy of the League of Women Voters. Other board members may participate in political campaigns and party politics in a very carefully thought out response to their visible positions as state board members. All board members need to be mindful of the importance of the League's nonpartisan policy and endeavor to protect the League's public image as it relates to this matter.
- F. Campaign Contributions: The president, the advocacy portfolio director and the voter service portfolio director should refrain from attending fundraising events and making contributions to the campaigns of candidates for any federal or statewide office or to political parties or other entities contributing to such federal or statewide candidates. The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member are to be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the board member.
- G. Social and Other Media: A board member shall not indicate her/his 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 her/him as a member of the board.
- H. Additional Clarification: Where the foregoing policies do not resolve the question, board members should present questions about specific situations to the president or the state board.