

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WHITE PLAINS NON-PARTISAN POLITICAL POLICY FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Rationale

The League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. However, historically and through its bylaws, "The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate." (Article II, Sec. 2, LWVUS Bylaws)

Nonpartisanship toward candidates and political parties is critical to the effectiveness of the League's citizen information and voter service aims. It is crucial that the public and legislators believe that the League's conclusions on legislation and ballot proposals are based on merit rather than politics. Therefore, Board members have a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create a partisan impression. If there's a question, the individual should ascertain in advance from the Board whether or not a particular activity may compromise nonpartisanship of the local League in any way.

League members are encouraged to be politically active. The individual restrictions only apply to the partisan activities of members of the Board. The local League Board decides the extent to which the public identifies a Board member's activities with those of the League. The public visibility associated with a specific political activity should be taken into account when considering the appropriateness of a Board member's participation.

Note: The partisan political activities of a spouse or relative are considered separate and distinct from the activities of that Board member.

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

1. Contributing sums below the reporting requirement threshold to candidates and/or political parties when done without publicity.
Note: The Board member is responsible for ensuring that there is no publicity associated with her/his contribution.
2. Serving as an election inspector.
3. Signing nominating petitions, except for League President and Voter Service Chair.
4. Attending coffees or other gatherings to meet candidates.
5. Serving on a public board, commission or committee. However, that Board member does not represent the League unless officially designated by the Board.
6. Presenting concerns about specific situations to the local League Board where the enumerated policies do not clearly resolve the uncertainty.

NON-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

1. Running for elective office.
Note: The definition of what constitutes an elective office may vary. If there is need for clarification in a particular situation, the Board member is advised to bring the issue to the Board.
2. Accepting appointment to fill an unexpired term of any public office normally filled by election.
3. Publicly supporting a candidate for partisan political office either in writing or in speech.
4. Contributing to local, county, state or national candidates sums above the reporting threshold for declaration to the Board of Elections.
5. Managing, taking an active role, or working in the campaign of any publicly elected candidate.
6. Serving as office holder, district leader or committeeman/woman in a political party or club.
7. Holding office in another organization that supports or opposes political parties or candidates.
8. Holding office in a non-profit "501c3" organization that, though non-partisan, takes political advocacy positions on current controversial national issues.
9. Circulating nominating petitions for candidates seeking political or non-partisan office.
10. Signing a petition, either online or in person, that is sponsored by a non-partisan organization if you are President, Vice Pres., or Voter Service Chair of the WP LWV.
11. Signing a petition, either online or in person, that is sponsored by a non-partisan organization when the national issue is controversial and closely connected with a political party's current position on it.
12. Holding coffees for candidates seeking political office.
13. Sponsoring or hosting parties or fund-raisers for any candidate.
14. Accompanying candidates on door-to-door canvassing visits.
15. Displaying campaign posters or signs on one's personal property.
16. Speaking or in any way working against a League position on an issue.
17. Campaigning for specific candidates at LWV meetings, including wearing campaign buttons, passing out flyers, soliciting signatures on petitions, etc.
18. Distributing publications or other material published by anybody other than the League at a League meeting.
19. Indicating political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government on social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify one as a member of the LWV Board.

OTHER

1. If a coalition that the local League belongs to or is considering joining will concentrate its activities on supporting or opposing candidates, then the League should not participate.