

Political Activity – Nonpartisan Policy Statement for LWVO (Revised 9/18/03; 11/07; 6/11; 9/11; 9/13; 7/16; 7/2017)

Although the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) routinely studies, comments and takes action with respect to governmental issues, measures and policies, it does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate. **Communication with an official or a candidate, when identifying oneself as a LWVO Board member, should reflect established LWV positions.** Nonetheless, the LWVO Board of Trustees values and relies upon the many skills and types of experience that individual board members bring to the League, including those acquired in public life through elective or appointive office. Involvement in public and political activities is encouraged by the League of Women Voters for all citizens.

However, certain activities must be limited or avoided to preserve the League's nonpartisan reputation. Some basic limitations on Board members' political activity, while they are serving in this capacity, are necessary to protect the nonpartisan stature of the League as an organization. Additionally, other than in her/his official capacity, neither the President(s) nor the Executive Director shall engage in any political activity, partisan or nonpartisan, including attending political fundraising events.

In order to balance these goals, the LWVO Board adopts the following policy, which shall be reviewed, and may be amended, at the beginning of each fiscal year.

A. Political Activity

1. **Elected Office.** Board member shall not seek or hold any partisan elective office at any level of government. A Board member may run for or hold a local non-partisan elective office, after consultation with and approval by the LWVO president and the affected local League.
2. **Political Party Office.** A Board member shall not serve in any official position in a political party at any level of government.
3. **Political Campaigns.** A Board member shall not chair a political campaign or administer fundraising for a political campaign, chair a campaign event, be a spokesperson, or work in any other significant way in the campaign of a candidate for a partisan office at any level of government.
4. **Campaign Contributions.** A Board member shall not make campaign contributions to campaigns or candidates for any state level or statewide office or to other entities contributing to such races. It is generally appropriate to make contributions in local and national political races.
5. **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, nor on social networking sites or other public venues that also prominently identify the individual as a member of the LWVO Board.
6. **Additional Clarification.** Board members shall present questions about all other specific situations, where any potential question of or compromise in the appearance of League nonpartisanship is potentially suggested, to the President of LWVO Board whenever the foregoing policies do not resolve the issue. LWVO strives to maintain its position of non-partisanship and if any position, office or circumstances can reasonably be construed as partisan the board member shall refrain from that activity. **Use discretion and be nonpartisan in public communications.**

- B. Board members shall not run for or hold elective state office. If a Board member declares for an elective office, the member shall resign from the Board. Public notices released by LWVO announcing the resignation of a Board member to run for political office shall be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning Board member's candidacy.
- C. A Board member may serve on any public board, commission, committee, or coalition. However, that Board member does not represent the League unless officially designated as a League representative by the LWVO Board.
- D. A Board member may not speak or work against a League position in any way.
- E. The League of Women Voters does not desire or presume to regulate the political activity of relatives, spouses, or domestic partners of Board members. However, it is incumbent upon current Board members to preserve a clear separation between their own nonpartisan stance, and any partisan activity undertaken by those with whom they are publicly connected. In the event that a conflict may arise with the political activity of a relative, spouse or domestic partner, the Board member is expected to bring the issue to the Board for resolution.