

## League of Women Voters – Whitewater Area Nonpartisan Policy

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate; it may take positions on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement.

The League recognizes the role of the political parties in our form of government and believes that participation in the activities of the political process is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility. While the League urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain the nonpartisanship of the organization. The Board has the responsibility of preserving the nonpartisanship of the organization.

- **Elected office.** A Board member shall not run for, nor hold, any partisan elective office at any level of government. A Board member may run for or hold a local nonpartisan elective office, after notifying the Board. Public notices released by the League announcing the resignation of a Board member to run for political office should be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning Board member's candidacy.
- **Political Party Office.** A Board member shall not serve in any official position in a political party at any level of government.
- **Political Campaigns:** The President, Voter Services Chair, Treasurer, or any other Board position deemed sensitive by the Board shall not:
  - Work actively for a candidate's election campaign
  - Display signs, campaign buttons, etc. for a candidate
  - Circulate candidates' nominating petitions
  - Engage in any political activity that might reasonably be construed as League endorsement of a party or candidate

Examples of political activities that all Board members may undertake include:

- Attend events to meet a candidate
- Make contributions in their individual name to the political party, candidate of their choice below the amount at which the contributor's name is required by law to be reported
- Work as poll workers
- Sign nominating petitions for candidates
- Circulate petitions for ballot issues that are consistent with League positions

Partisan political activities of a partner or relative of a Board member are considered as separate and distinct from activities of the Board member.

- **Party Affiliation:** Board members usually have party affiliations and should certainly carry out the responsibilities of every voter in exercising the franchise, including the responsibility to become informed about candidates.
- **League Positions:** Once the League (local, state, or national) takes a position on an issue, members may not identify themselves as League members in publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a League position.
- **Petitions:** Only Board approved petitions may be circulated at membership meetings and events. The decision whether to sign a petition should be left up to individual Board members.

- **Social and Other Media:** Board members shall not indicate her/his political affiliations/candidate preferences at any government level in the media, including on social networking sites or public venues that identify them as a League Board member.
- **Membership Roster:** The League's membership roster is not to be made available for non-League use without Board consent.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborations with organizations should be carefully considered and vetted to preserve the League's nonpartisanship.

This policy shall be reviewed at the first meeting of the new Board of Directors following the Annual Meeting.

Revised by the League of Women Voters Whitewater Area Board of Directors: April 1, 2017