

## **LWV NONPARTISAN POLICY**

The bylaws of the League of Women Voters of the United States stipulate that the League of Women Voters “shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.” This policy of nonpartisanship has always been a source of strength to the LWV and must be zealously guarded. It is the cornerstone of our voter service efforts. Candidates are willing to appear on our platforms and to give us material for our Voters Guides because they have confidence that they will be treated fairly and that the material will not be used for partisan purposes. This same reputation accounts for the confidence placed in our material by other organizations, by newspapers and by interested citizens. The League’s purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues. It urges all its members to become fully informed about candidates and issues. And it encourages all members, except its directors and those members who represent the LWV before the public, to work actively in the party of their choice. With these exceptions League members may seek an active role in the nomination of candidates for public office, run for office, stimulate public discussion of candidates and their views during the campaign, urge citizen commitment to parties and candidates by means of political contributions and, in general, take part in the political activities of their choice.

## **LWV CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

This conflict of interest and nonpartisan policy applies to all elections—partisan or nonpartisan.

The conflict of interest and nonpartisan policy applies to DIRECTORS (elected appointed, acting, nominated) and MEMBERS WHO REPRESENT THE STATE LEAGUE BEFORE THE PUBLIC. With the exception of the prohibition on Board members seeking and holding public office, Local Leagues in Utah should regard these policies as non-binding guidelines.

Individual members of the League of Women Voters Board of Directors, and others affected by this policy shall bring potential conflicts with the policy to the board. It is the responsibility of the League of Women Voters of Utah Board of Directors to interpret the non-partisan and conflict of interest policy as it pertains to specific situations, and to determine the significance of other possible conflicts not addressed in the policy.

In order to protect the League’s nonpartisan reputation, it is important that ALL MEMBERS of the League of Women Voters of Utah and the public understand the following:

1. The League takes a position only on governmental issues and not on candidates for elective (governmental) office.
2. The League is nonpartisan, not bipartisan. Bipartisan means representing both parties; the League represents no party. LWV Utah Non-Partisan and Conflict of Interest Policy
3. Every LWV member must take the responsibility for clearly differentiating between her personal opinions and the League position.

4. All LWV members are expected to keep their League activity and their political activity completely separate and distinct. For example, members may not distribute League materials at the same time as material for a candidate or a party. This applies to partisan and nonpartisan elections of any type.
5. The League of Women Voters of Utah shall not elect or appoint any member to the board, or to a capacity in which the League is represented before the public, who has, within the prior six-month period, held a political office or engaged in partisan political activity to the extent that she/he is publicly identified with a political party or candidate.
6. The 1972 national convention of the LWVUS recommended that board members and members who represent the LWV before the public observe the following guidelines:
  - a. The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member be considered as separate and distinct from the activities of the board member.
  - b. Public notices released by a League announcing the resignation of a board member be carefully worded to avoid the appearance of endorsing the resigning board member's candidacy.
  - c. The League's nonpartisan reputation is sufficiently strong to ENSURE that contributions from office holders or candidates can be accepted without being misconstrued as endorsement of those donors.
  - d. Board members may 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 and to attend precinct meetings and caucuses.

Activities in which League of Women Voters of Utah Board members and those representing the League of Women Voters of Utah MAY NOT participate include:

1. Holding, or actively seeking an elective office.
2. Having an official position in a party organization, or in an organization endorsing candidates for public office.
3. Participating conspicuously in campaigns for individuals in such a way as to publicly identify the League member with said individual.
4. Contributing conspicuously to any candidate or party in such a way as to identify the League members with the party or individual.
5. Speaking at party organization meetings (attendance and voting for precinct official are allowed.)
6. Carrying a petition for a school board candidate.
7. Acting as host, or hostess, or taking an active part at a coffee or rally for candidates of one party. Attendance is encouraged.
8. Board members may not lobby for a position that is in opposition to, or in conflict with, a League position.

From the Utah LWV website policy pages April 2012. Originally adopted December 2001 (Based on the Montgomery County, Maryland policy of 1989)