

Non-partisan Policy of the League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area
Adopted 2018; reviewed and approved September 2021, August 2022

General Statement: The League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area is a nonpartisan organization that does not support or oppose candidates for public office. The League also acts on issues, but only those issues that the membership chooses for study and action. League board members, indeed all League members, are encouraged as individuals to participate actively in the political process—to vote in elections, join political parties, attend candidates forums, serve as poll workers, and attend seminars on issues. They may also write their legislators in support of or in opposition to issues. However, because nonpartisanship is one of the League’s foremost assets, it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of the LWV of the Cooperstown Area to assure that its nonpartisanship remains intact, and as such restricts the activities of its Board members.

Regarding Public Offices: Board members who serve as the public face of the League—in particular, the President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director—may not carry out certain activities as regards to public office:

- President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director may not run for any local, state, or federal political office;
- President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director may not accept a position in the campaign of a candidate for office;
- The President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director may not circulate petitions for candidates or work behind the scenes for or fundraise for a candidate for a political office on the local, state or federal level;
- The President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director may not contribute to the campaigns for candidates for office for local offices including State Senate and State Assemblypersons or for candidates for U.S. House of Representatives or for any offices for which there is a possibility that a candidates forum organized by LWV of the Cooperstown Area may be conducted.
- The President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director may hold appointed political offices, such as village, town, or county commissions or committees, after consultation with the board.
- Board members who are heading active issue campaigns should consult with the board before deciding to run for office or publicly support a candidate by holding a gathering for a partisan or non-partisan office.
- The President or Co-president and the Voter Service Chair should consult with the board before his or her spouse/domestic partner files a petition to run for office.

Campaign Contributions: All board members except the President or Co-president and the Voter Service Chair may contribute to the campaigns of candidates running for public office. The President or Co-presidents and Voter Service Director **may** contribute to the campaigns for candidates for statewide offices [e.g. governor, state attorney general etc.] or for candidates for U.S. Senate.

Issue Campaigns: The President or Co-presidents, Voter Service Director and active issue chairs may not campaign for or against issues that will be on the ballot that are not supported or opposed by the League of Women Voters. In addition, they should consult with the board before contributing to or campaigning for an issue that is not related to a League position. All board members should consult with the board before agreeing to serve on the board of a lobbying organization that opposes positions held by the League of Women Voters.

Any board member of the LWV of the Cooperstown Area except those specifically mentioned above, may run for office, publicly support a candidate by circulating petitions, organizing rallies, holding gatherings for partisan and non-partisan offices, participate in get-out-the-vote activities; make contributions to a candidate, hold an appointive political office; circulate petitions for and support issue campaigns not sponsored by the League; hold positions on boards of other lobbying organizations; and hold appointed local, state or federal government positions.

Except as mentioned above, LWV of the Cooperstown Area board members may continue to serve on the board while a spouse/domestic partner runs for or holds a political office.

Members of the LWV of the Cooperstown Area’s board, however, must also recognize that they have a special responsibility to assure that their public activities in support of candidates for office or issues do not create a partisan impression or compromise the nonpartisan policy of the League of Women Voters of the Cooperstown Area. Because of these concerns, Board members should confer with the entire Board of the LWV of the Cooperstown Area before:

- Filing to run for local political office;
- Accepting a position in the campaign of, agreeing to work behind the scenes for, or fundraising for a candidate for a political office on the local level;
- Testifying on an issue for another organization; or
- Participating in an activity that may compromise the nonpartisan policy.
- No board member, in fact no League member, may speak on behalf of the League without the permission of the board.

Reviewed and Approved by the Board of Directors of the LWV of the Cooperstown Area, August 2022.