



NONPARTISANSHIP POLICY

(Revised May 2024, Adopted April 2022)

PURPOSE: The choice made in 1920 to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office continues today to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. The purpose of the League's non-partisan policy is to protect the credibility of the League of Women Voters (LWV) of the Helena Area as an organization that does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. Only to the extent that the public and elected officials are convinced of the League's genuine impartiality towards candidates for elective office will the League be able to render effective voter service activities and gain a wider base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

The limitations described in this policy apply primarily to board members who hold what might be viewed as "sensitive" portfolios (such as the Co-president, Voter Services Chair, and Legislative Action Chair). When the term Board member is used, the restrictions apply to all board members.

The League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. However, it shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

Recognizing that the League experience uniquely equips members for public life and wishing to encourage members to utilize their knowledge and abilities, non-board members are urged to participate fully in party activities (on an individual basis). Board members' activities must be limited to preserve the League's nonpartisan position.

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. Resigning from the board to run for political office does not mean resigning from the League, nor does it mean the board member cannot serve on the board later.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS: Co-presidents/Vice presidents, the Legislative Action Chair and the Voter Services Chair, and Board members should refrain from attending fundraising events and making contributions in excess of \$50 or more to the campaigns of candidates for any federal or statewide office or to political parties or other entities contributing to such federal or state candidates during their term of office on the LWV Board because high-visibility leaders must embody the principle of nonpartisanship.

Co-presidents/Vice presidents, the Legislative Action Chair and the Voter Services Chair shall not chair or administer fundraising or political campaigns, chair campaign events or work in a significant way in the campaign of a candidate. Significant campaign work is understood to

mean any work that involves a board member's name being attached to an event or a donor list or endorsement that appears in print or on a website or elsewhere in social media. Campaign work that does not involve public recognition is not in violation of this LWV policy. An example of allowed campaign work is helping in a campaign office doing behind the scenes work such as helping with computer entry, stuffing envelopes, etc.

SOCIAL AND OTHER MEDIA: The Co-presidents/President and Vice President, the Legislative Action Chair and the Voter Services Chair shall not indicate her/his political affiliations or candidate preferences at any level of government in the media, including social networking sites or other public venues. Any board member shall not identify his or herself as a League Board member while supporting or opposing any political party or candidate for public office.

PUBLIC COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES: Any board member may serve on any public advisory board, commission, committee, or coalition; however, that board member does not represent the League unless officially designated as a League representative by the League board. If a League member represents the League on a commission, the board is not bound to support that commission's recommendations. If the recommendations differ from or cover more points than the League's positions, the board should clarify the League stance and what it does and does not endorse in the commission's report.

A board member may not speak or in any way work against a League position. The political activities of a spouse or relative of a board member are to be considered as separate and distinct from the activities of the board member.

PARTY AFFILIATION: Board members usually have party affiliations and should carry out the responsibilities of every voter in exercising the franchise, including the responsibility to become informed about candidates.

CONTROVERSY: The League's nonpartisan stance does not mean the League should not get involved in controversy. The League will be a strong and effective political force to the degree it can deal with and accept controversy, live with uncertainty, and avoid using the nonpartisan policy as a shield for not getting involved.