

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

LEAD

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY



Staying Nonpartisan in Hyper-Partisan Times

Welcome

January 22, 2022

Our Talk's Agenda

- Defining Nonpartisan
- Responding to Key Issues



The Enduring Challenge

- Working successfully in a hyper-partisan environment can be difficult.
- Sometimes the exploration of facts can be seen as a **PARTISAN ACT.**



Nonpartisan & Bipartisan: The Difference

Bipartisan generally refers to:

- Cooperation
- Agreement and/or
- Compromise

Between two political parties

So, what is the difference?



What does “Nonpartisan” mean to the LWVUS?

The League of Women Voters of the United States is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

- LWVUS



How does this look as we navigate our lives?

Let's review the SC State League's position:

Neither the President/co-presidents, voter services chair/director, LWVSC authorized lobbyists, nor any member who represents and speaks on behalf of LWVSC, shall run for or hold elective office nor serve in any elected position in a political party.

(cont'd.)



This clearly defined position is an easy one to follow:

Nor shall they undertake any action that will cause them to be identified publicly as supporting any candidate for office or any political party, including on their individual social media feeds

And they shall not endorse any party or any candidate for elected office, shall not attend fundraising events, nor make campaign contributions.



LWVSC Further Defines Differences between Key Board members:

All other state board members may:

- Attend fundraising events
- Sign petitions
- Make campaign contributions

While state board members shall NOT run for state or national elective office, **they may run for local office**, regardless of political designation – **after consultation with the state board.**



State and local leagues must have nonpartisan language in their bylaws –

Local leagues should also have **written nonpartisan board policies.**

- These policies should be reviewed each year and acknowledged by each board member.

Local leagues may have more restrictive non-partisan policies than the state league but ***cannot*** have a less restrictive policy.



The “Speaking With One Voice [One Voice]” Policy

One of the MOST IMPORTANT TENETS of the LWV
Ensures the League’s message is CLEAR & CONSISTENT

**Who from your local league should
speak on behalf of your organization?**



LWVUS says “Issues are NOT Partisan”

Do you agree or disagree and Why?



How do you/we respond to partisan claims like these?

“The LWV is really part of the Democratic Party ...Most of its members are Democrats.”

Or

“The LWV is interested NOT in good government; its positions on issues align much more closely with Democrats than Republicans.”



Key Issues (Stances)

- Wanting EVERY VOTER to have EQUAL ACCESS to the Ballot box
- Wanting a ROBUST DEMOCRACY in which EVERYONE has an EQUAL VOICE & EQUAL REPRESENTATION
- Desiring more elected officials who REFLECT THE DIVERSE MAKEUP of our country

These are ALL NONPARTISAN ISSUES.
They are AMERICAN VALUES



The LWV has NOT Changed its Position in 100 Years

The wording may evolve, but the MISSION remains:

Empower Voters & Defend Democracy

There is a need to defend democracy in the face of:

- Voter Suppression aimed at people of color
- Misinformation
- Divisiveness
- Lies



- **Generally, it is ok to...**
 - Retweet politicians when their tweets align with our advocacy
 - Have your own political opinions, but be careful if they differ from LWV's positions
 - Tag and call on politicians to take action that aligns with our advocacy
 - Engage elected officials to advance our advocacy priorities
 - Joint press conferences; Participate in panel discussions together; Invite them to speak at League events; Participate in rallies; Meet with elected officials to lobby them in their official capacity
 - Engage elections officials to advance our voter access goals
 - Co-host voter engagement events; Promote voter engagement events host by elections officials; Support poll worker recruitment; Participate in advisory groups/committees



- **Generally, it is not ok to...**
 - Respond to politicians directly
 - Call out a party as being good or bad
 - Advocate for how people should vote on candidates
 - Retweet or share a political party's post
 - Focus your remarks on an elected official
 - Give an elected official a League award when they are running for re-election
 - Hold an empty chair debate for candidates



What does your Social Media say about you?

- What you like is visible, not just what you post
- Never assume your post can't be seen
- "Don't feed the trolls" - media arguments only elevate opposition claims
- When in doubt, act as if you are the League of Women Voters
- How would you want the organization to be seen?
- Refrain from posting/liking anything that you wouldn't want to announce to the public as coming from the League

Remember, Social Media follows you and reflects on all organizations you associate with.



**Let's Talk About
Non-Partisanship Scenarios
as a Member of LWV**



**BREAKOUT
ROOM
DILEMMAS**

Breakout Rooms

Things to Keep in Mind

- 20 minutes is allocated for break out group discussion.
- For each group of four assigned to the same scenario, one group will be randomly selected to present their solution.
- If your group finishes early, you may consider additional questions or raise your own questions in the remaining time.
- If your group comes to a different conclusion, you may send a message to the Chat with your group number and name to request to speak to the issue.

Tips

- Note your breakout room number.
- Begin your breakout room with brief introductions of group members (Ex. Name and League).
- Identify a spokesperson to present conclusions.
- If you have time left, you may want to discuss other non-partisan issues you and your League may have encountered.



BREAKOUT ROOM DILEMMAS

- Groups 1-4: You are a League member, not on the state or local board of directors. You have been involved in Voter service activities, including helping with candidate forums. You have been asked to moderate a candidate forum and you have made campaign contributions to one of the candidates. Should you agree to be the moderator of that candidate forum?
- Groups 5-8: Your League's Vice President of Advocacy has been asked to speak to a political party. Should he/she accept the invitation? A nominee for your League's board of directors is the newly elected President of a local political party. What should the nominating committee do?
- Groups 9-12: Should local Leagues volunteer to pick up and deliver absentee ballots? Should League Board members contribute to candidates for office? A local League's Voter Service chair is planning to run for a non-partisan office. May he/she do so or does he/she need to resign from the board?
- Groups 13-16: Your League is interested in registering new voters in under-represented communities and you've been invited to partner with a group registering Latino voters. The organizer is the wife of a candidate for elected office. Should you partner with them?



Questions?

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THANK YOU!

CONTACT INFO