

Nonpartisan Policy

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

The purpose of this policy is to assure the credibility of the League of Women Voters of Virginia as a nonpartisan organization. Only to the extent that the public and its elected officials are convinced of the League's genuine nonpartisanship will the League be able to render effective voters service efforts and gain a wide base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

A state board member must recognize that, as a result of close identification with the League, she or he has a special responsibility to see that her or his activities do not create a partisan impression. Any member who has doubts about appropriate activities must consult the President or the board.

STATE BOARD MEMBERS MAY:

- Attend informational political functions.
- Attend, but not host, fundraising events for candidates or parties.
- Vote in primaries and attend party mass meetings in the absence of a primary.
- Serve as an election official.
- Accept an appointment to a non-elective governmental office, board, or commission, provided there is no conflict of interest, based on the LWV-VA Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Run for or hold any nonpartisan elective office.

STATE BOARD MEMBERS MAY NOT:

- Contribute financial support to a partisan candidate or a political party.
- Run for or hold any partisan elective office, or run for delegate to a political party convention. A board member who plans to do so should formally resign from the board no later than the time of filing for the election. She or he may not serve on the board again for the remainder of the League year, or for a minimum of six months.
- Endorse, publicize, or work for any partisan local, state, or national candidate or any political party in a way that publicly identifies the board member with the partisan candidate or political party. This includes hosting an event for a candidate, holding an official position in a political party, circulating a nominating petition for a candidate, signing letters or making phone calls on a candidate's behalf, and using bumper stickers, yard signs, buttons or other paraphernalia endorsing a candidate or political party.
- Hold office in an organization that endorses partisan candidates for public office.

The political activities of a board member's spouse or other family members should be considered separate and distinct from the board member's own activities and are not covered by the above policies.

The state board will be responsible for interpretations of the above policies.

The above policies do not apply to off-board administrative, program, or action chairs or to individuals holding League-related appointments to public bodies or coalitions. These individuals should review their personal situation and determine how strongly non-League members identify them with the League. Based on this review, these individuals should use

discretion in their political activities. Any of the aforementioned individuals who are involved in visible partisan activities should not testify at public meetings or lobby for the League.

The President, the Voters Service Director, the Legislative Coordinator, the Associate Legislative Coordinator and the Advocacy Director should be particularly aware of activities that could compromise the League's nonpartisanship, and should consult the board if they have any doubts about such activity.

Approved by Board of Directors, LWV-VA

Sept. 29, 1995; 1996; 1997;1998; 1999; 2003; 2005; 2007; 2010; July 2011 (as amended), August 2011(Lynn Gordon grammar edits)