

Nonpartisan Policy: League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County

Adopted by the Board at its 8/8/2015 meeting.

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League urges its members to become fully informed about candidates and issues.

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 League recognizes the role of the political parties in our form of government and believes that participation in the activities of the political parties is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility. While the League urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain the nonpartisanship of the organization. The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of San Joaquin County has established the following policy guidelines:

Board of Directors

The Board has the responsibility of maintaining the fact of the nonpartisanship of the organization.

If a Board member plans to engage in political activity, that member must seek a Board decision as to whether the activity would affect the community's perception of the League's nonpartisanship.

The President and the Director of Voter Services may not take an active, visible role in a campaign for a political candidate or for a non-League issue.

Board members may not run for elective office.

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 the candidates.

League Positions

Once League (local, state or national) takes a position on an issue, members may not identify themselves as League members in publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a League position.

Every LWV member must take the responsibility for clearly differentiating between her personal opinions and the League position.

Member Responsibilities

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.

Representing the League

Members representing the League in the community should be sensitive to their responsibilities. When acting in public as League representatives, members must not allow partisanship to be discernable. These members should be fully aware of League positions.

Serving on Commissions

Members may serve on governmental commissions at their own discretion. If the appointment is League-related, the appointee should be fully aware of the League positions as they relate to the commission's responsibilities.

League Meetings

Members in the leadership roles at unit and other public meetings have the responsibility to ensure the nonpartisanship of the meeting and its environment. Only Board of Directors-approved petitions may be circulated at League meetings.

League Roster

The League's roster is not to be made available to non-League use without Board consent.

This nonpartisan policy applies to Officers and Directors on the Board and members who represent the League before the public.