

League of Women Voters of Berrien and Cass Counties Nonpartisanship Policy

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan but political organization and has been since its founding in 1920. The LWV 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 nonpartisan policy is key to the LWV's reputation and adds *credibility* to the League's positions on issues.

The League recognizes the role of political parties in our form of government and believes that participation in the activities of 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 Berrien and Cass Counties has established the following guidelines.

All League Members: Every League member must take the responsibility for clearly differentiating between her or his personal opinions and League positions. All members are expected to keep their League activity and their political activity completely separate and distinct. While members are encouraged to be politically active they are not to act in the name of the LWV. League members may not publicly identify themselves as League members and then take a position that is in opposition to a League position.

The Board of Directors: The Board has the responsibility for maintaining the nonpartisanship of the chapter. In the event a decision is required on the provisions of this policy the Board shall make that decision.

Board members may not hold or actively seek an elective political office, with a very few exceptions (such as election as a delegate to a state constitutional convention). Should a Board member decide to run for an unapproved elective office, she or he must resign from the Board. The resignation will be announced in such a way that it cannot be considered an endorsement. Board members must notify the Board if they accept a significant role in a party organization or in an organization endorsing a candidate for public office.

The President and Voter Service Chair(s), being particularly visible members of the Board, may not take an active role in any partisan political activity.

Public Commissions and Committees: Members may serve on governmental commissions or committees, and, indeed, often do so as representatives of the League. In the latter case, however, the League is not bound to support the commission or committee's recommendations. Members are encouraged to inform the Board when and if they become members of a commission or committee.

League Meetings: Members in the leadership role at a League meeting or League-sponsored public meeting have the responsibility to ensure the nonpartisanship of the meeting and its environment.

League Roster: The LWVBCC roster is not to be made available for non-League use without the Board's consent. *The League's mailing list and e-mail address list are not to be used for political purposes or other types of solicitation.*

This nonpartisan policy shall be reviewed annually by the Board of the LWVBCC at the first meeting of the Board after the Annual Meeting.

Adopted: June 28, 2005

The section in Italics added July 18, 2006

Reviewed June 26, 2007

Reviewed July 15, 2008

Reviewed July 21, 2009 word change in first paragraph (in italics)

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