

LWW Martin County Nonpartisan Policy

In 1920, The League of Women Voters made a choice: The League would neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office. This decision continues today to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. This nonpartisan policy has added strength to the League's positions on issues and has made wide acceptance of League voter service and other educational activities possible.

At the same time, the League is a political organization and encourages members to participate fully in the political party of their choice, to run for office, to contribute their time, finances, energy in support of candidates as well as to be active generally in the governmental process. It is an advantage to the League to have politically active members. For its active members, it can be a personally satisfying experience.

Our nonpartisan policy is the cornerstone of our Voter Service program: candidates appear at our events because they trust our forums will be fair and impartial and they know they will be treated with respect. Candidates give information to the League because they know it will not be used for partisan purposes. This reputation for fairness and independence accounts for the confidence placed in our positions by interested citizens, other organizations, and the media.

While the League urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain our nonpartisan policy, which has always been a major source of strength for the League. For example, members should refrain from wearing the League button while attending a campaign rally for a candidate or working for the candidate.

Nonpartisan Policy Applicable to Board Members

Individual Board members must recognize that as a result of close identification with the League, each board member has a special responsibility to see that his/her activities do not create a partisan impression.

- Board members may not run for office, nor may they take a leadership role in political campaigns.
- Board members should refrain from activities that would detract from the League's nonpartisan image.

The political activity of a spouse or relative of a Board member is considered separate and distinct from the activities of the Board member.

Sensitive positions come with greater restriction on Board members' activity. The President, Vice-President and the Voter Service and Local Government chairs may not:

- Participate in fundraising events with proceeds going to candidates;
- Publicly endorse any candidate for local office (such as displaying a yard sign or a bumper sticker).

The President, Vice-President and the Voter Services and Local Government chairs may attend free political party events for information only.

Board members holding nonsensitive positions:

- May contribute time, money, and attend fundraising events; but
- Should still avoid highly visible roles in campaigns that may detract from the League's nonpartisan image.

Board members shall present questions about specific situations to the Board if the foregoing policy does not resolve the question.

(Adopted 7-15-2017)