

LWVTSC

Nonpartisan Policy

Section 1. General statement of nonpartisanship. The League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County is a nonpartisan organization that promotes political responsibility through informed, active participation of citizens in government and acts on selected public policy issues. The League acts on public policy issues based on positions established through member agreement. The League is considered "nonpartisan" because it does not support or oppose any political party, candidate whether or not the candidate is under a party designation, or candidate committee. The League's nonpartisan stance is essential to maintaining the credibility and effectiveness of the League and should be guarded carefully. This nonpartisan policy of the League is intended to balance any non-League-related partisan participation of individual members, Board members, and specific Board office holders, with the vigilant maintenance of the League's nonpartisan position.

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this policy:

(a) "Candidate" means an individual who: (1) Appoints a treasurer or a candidate committee;

(2) makes a public announcement of intention to seek nomination or election to any elective office;

(3) makes any expenditure or accepts any contribution for such nomination or election to any elective office; or

(4) files a declaration or petition to become a candidate for any elective office.

(b) "Candidate committee" means a committee appointed by a candidate to receive contributions and make expenditures for the candidate.

(c) "Contribution" means:

(1) Any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, gift, loan or payment of money or any other thing of value given to a candidate, candidate committee, party committee or political committee for the express purpose of nominating, electing or defeating a candidate;

(2) any advance, conveyance, deposit, distribution, gift, loan or payment of money or any other thing of value made to expressly advocate the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate;

(3) the payment, by any person other than a candidate, candidate committee, party committee or political committee, of compensation to an individual for the personal services rendered without charge to or for a candidate's campaign or to or for any such committee;

(4) the purchase of tickets or admissions to, or advertisements in journals or programs for, a fund-raising event for a candidate; or

(5) a mailing of materials designed to expressly advocate the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate, which is made and paid for by a party committee with the consent of such candidate.

(d) "League" or "LWVTSC" means the League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County.

(e) "Partisan political activity" means expressly advocating, the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate.

Sec. 3. Provisions applicable to all League members.

(a) The League, by promoting active citizen participation in government and the political process, encourages members to individually support the party and candidates of their choice. However, a League member shall not undertake any activity, directly or indirectly, which may constitute partisan political activity which could be attributed to the League. A League member is expected to keep all

League activity and the member's partisan political activity completely separate. For example, a League member shall not:

- Identify as a member of the League when engaged in any partisan political activity;
- solicit contributions for a candidate at any meeting of the League or the Board of Directors, or any event sponsored solely or in part by the League;
- distribute, or cause to be distributed, at any meeting of the League or the Board of Directors, or any event sponsored solely or in part by the League, any document which expressly advocates the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate;
- disseminate digital information expressly advocating the nomination, election or defeat of a candidate in such a way that a viewer or recipient of such information would reasonably understand that the League is advocating the nomination, election, or defeat of such candidate; or
- use the League's name or the League's logo in or as part of an endorsement of, or in opposition to, any candidate.

(b) Partisan political activity of a member of the household of a League member shall be considered separate and distinct from the activities of the League member. Both League members and members of their households must exercise good judgment to avoid the appearance of partisan political activity on the part of the League.

Sec. 4. Provisions applicable to certain members of the Board. Pursuant to Section 2 of Article IV of the Bylaws of the League, and in addition to provisions of this policy that apply to all League members, the President of the Board of Directors and any member of the Board filling the functional role of Voter Services Chairperson, Membership Chairperson, or Tuesday Topics Coordinator shall not engage in any partisan political activity. To the extent that this section conflicts with section 3, this section shall control.

Sec. 5. Board members; candidacy for, or holding, an elective office.

(a) A Board member who declares as a candidate for or who serves in an elective public office shall resign from the Board. Any public statement regarding the resignation of a Board member who becomes ineligible to serve because of election to public office shall be made by the President, not the resigning member. In any such statement, the President shall avoid the appearance of endorsing or opposing the resigning member's partisan political activities.

(b) Incumbents in elected public office shall not be eligible for nomination, election, or appointment to the Board.

Sec. 6. Holding a non-elective office

(a) A Board member may serve as an appointee on a non-partisan governmental body, at the member's discretion.

(b) Any Board member who applies for or is appointed to a position on a governmental body that designates seats by political party shall resign from the Board.

(c) If a Board member is appointed to a governmental entity as a representative of LWVTSC, such member must be fully aware of and support League positions as they relate to the governmental body's responsibilities.

Sec. 7. League Activities. Elected officials and candidates shall not be introduced or recognized at League meetings or League-sponsored activities unless the elected official is in attendance in an official capacity and at the request of the Board of Directors.

Sec. 8. Review of Policy. This policy shall be reviewed, at least biannually, by the Board of Directors to ensure that the policy is adequate to protect the credibility and effectiveness of the League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County.

History: Adopted January 14, 2020.