

# POLITICAL POLICY

## League of Women Voters of Lackawanna County

(Adopted 5/18/02)

The **purpose of this policy** is to assure the credibility of the Lackawanna County League of Women Voters as a nonpartisan organization. As a nonpartisan organization, the League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. 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 and citizens education, as well as gain a wide base of support for its positions on governmental issues.

The **League's purpose** is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental 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.

In order to protect the League's nonpartisan reputation, it is **important that all LWV members and the public understand the following:**

1. The League is nonpartisan; the League does not support or oppose any political candidate or political party.
2. The League may take positions on governmental issues.
3. Once the local, state or national League has taken a position on an issue, members may not identify themselves as League members when publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a stated League position.
4. The local League may choose to not support a state or national League position, but may not work in opposition to an existing position.
5. All LWV members must take responsibility for clearly differentiating between their personal opinions and the League position.
6. The League president is the only member who speaks for the League. At times the president may delegate this responsibility to a specific member for a specific purpose.
7. Members representing the League on projects in the community should be sensitive to the image they present of the League.
8. When acting in the public as League representatives, members must not allow any kind of partisanship to be discernable. These members should be fully aware of League position.
9. Members may serve on governmental commissions at their own discretion.
10. League representatives to commissions are appointed by the president of the League. The appointee should be fully aware of the League positions as they relate to the commission's responsibilities.
11. Members in leadership roles at meetings that are open to the public have the responsibility to ensure the nonpartisanship of the meeting and its environment.
12. Nominating petitions for partisan elective office as well as other campaign materials may not be circulated or distributed at League meetings.
13. Candidates actively running for office will not be asked to speak at League meetings during the campaign period. Exceptions are debates and forums
14. In general, the membership list is not available for non-League use. The board may approve specific requests when it feels the membership would benefit from such approval.

In order to protect the League's nonpartisan reputation, those members serving as **President, Vice-President Secretary/Treasurer, Director of Voters Service, Director of Membership, and Director of Public Relations** may not:

1. Run for or hold any partisan elective office.
2. Endorse, publicize or work for any local, county, state or national candidate or any political party. While giving a "Meet the Candidate" meeting is considered support, attending such meetings is allowed with caution.
3. Contribute an amount to a candidate's campaign that must by law be reported to a government agency.

In order to protect the League's nonpartisan reputation, when conducting candidate debates and forums (as sole sponsor or as a co-sponsor), the LWVLC will invite to participate all candidates who have been approved **by** the Board of Elections to have their names placed on the ballot as candidates for the position for which the debate/forum has been specified by the LWVLC.

**Any questions about the political activity of any board member** should be brought before the board to determine whether the activity would affect the community's perception of the League's nonpartisanship.