



League of Women Voters of Port Washington Manhasset

Members Nonpartisan Policy¹

“The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.”

– Article II, Sec. 2, LWVUS Bylaws²

*Herein the word “League” refers to the League of Women Voters
of Port Washington-Manhasset.*

Purpose of Our League’s Nonpartisan Policy

Our nonpartisan policy with respect to candidates and political parties has always been a source of strength to the League and must be zealously guarded. It is the cornerstone of our unique voter service efforts. Candidates are willing to appear on our platforms and provide information for our Voters Guides because they have confidence that they will be treated fairly and that the material will not be used for partisan purposes.

This same reputation secures the confidence placed in our material by other organizations, newspapers and interested citizens. The League’s purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues. League advocacy on legislation and ballot proposals is more effective when the public and the legislators believe that the League’s conclusions are based on merit rather than partisan politics.

The League encourages all members to become fully informed about candidates and issues, and it further believes that the participation of informed citizens is beneficial to political parties and to our democracy.³

Applying Our League’s Nonpartisan Policy to Members

1. The League encourages all members, *except its officers and directors, and those members who visibly represent the LWV before the public*, to work actively in their party and for candidates of their choice. When working for a political party or candidate for elected partisan public office, League members should **not** use the name of the League nor purport to represent the League nor do the League’s business while engaged in a partisan activity.

¹ Approved August 4, 2021.

² LWVUS Bylaws, available <https://www.lwv.org/ProposedBylaws>

³ Adapted from LWVNY Nonpartisan policy, In-League, p. 31, available <https://lwvnyonline.org/LLresources/in-league-11/InLeague.pdf>; and LWV Utah Nonpartisan Policy, available <https://www.lwvutah.org/nonpartisan-policy>

2. Members who are not officers or directors and who actively and visibly participate in partisan politics should be sensitive to the visibility of their League activities to avoid compromising public trust in the League's nonpartisan status. Similarly, members who are not officers or directors but who actively and visibly participate in public League activities should be sensitive to the visibility of their participation in partisan political activities. Should they feel tension about this balance, they should bring them to the President or Board immediately.

Aligning League Programs and Processes with the Nonpartisan Policy

League programs: The League will not invite anyone who has declared as a candidate for any office to participate in any kind of program, whether as a speaker or member of a panel, unless it is a candidate's forum. This ban would include staff members of an incumbent.⁴

Observer Corps: who attend meetings of local legislatures and elected boards have the responsibility to observe, to document issues of relevance to the League, and to report back to the Board. Although Observers may ask questions for clarification, they should avoid commenting at these meetings, unless authorized by the Board to do so.⁵

Public Meetings with Controversial Discussion: Board members should use discretion whenever speaking publicly on controversial issues.⁶

One Voice: Public statements by the League should be signed or co-signed by the League president. While we cherish the right to disagree as individuals, when we speak for the League in public, we speak with authorization from the Board and to support LWVPWM positions.

The Power of Being Nonpartisan: Remind the public why they trust us — in word and deed.⁷

Nominating Committee & Nominees: It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee of the League to inform all prospective board members of this nonpartisan policy, to interview them about their significant or visibly public campaign or partisan activity, if any— and to bring any questions about that background to the Board to decide the potential nominee's eligibility for Board service, as appropriate.

⁴ LWV New Jersey, which also suggests “*A good rule of thumb*: federal officials cannot be asked during even numbered years and state officials cannot be asked during odd numbered years,” available <https://www.lwvprinceton.org/about/nonpartisan-policy>

⁵ LWV Rivertowns, NY, available at https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/lwvr_nonpartisan_policy_2019_october_update.pdf

⁶ LWV Rivertowns, NY, Ibid.

⁷ LWVUS Nonpartisan Guidance, available at https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/august_guidance.pdf