

URGENT message about our nonpartisanship

We are getting information and questions at the state level that have raised serious concerns about how well we are dealing with our being a nonpartisan organization in a highly charged political year. It is time for all of us to give this serious attention in our board meetings.

Here are two facts about the League that may appear even to us to be in conflict

- 1) The League's greatest asset is the public's respect for it as an organization that never supports or opposes any candidate or political party
- 2) In its mission statement, the LWV "encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government."

Honoring both these statements often proves challenging even to experienced League leaders, especially when elections are raising issues the League particularly cares about. But somehow, almost a century after our birth, we have managed to meet this challenge and remain both "above suspicion" and politically active. In this election season when so much appears to be at stake, it is critical that we all remind ourselves how we have done this.

- We discuss, adopt and **REVIEW ANNUALLY** nonpartisan policies at all levels of the League.
- We recognize that strict adherence to our policies may not be enough. We have to keep asking ourselves how the public **PERCEIVES** us. Do we appear truly fair? Even when we are advocating for a position, do we appear grounded in fact, not just passion? Do we watch one another to help all of us stay on track, recognizing that how each individual League is perceived affects how ALL of us are perceived? During a time like the one we're in, we may need to follow even **stricter standards** than required by our policies.

We ask all League boards to review this helpful information on the LWVUS website, even if you think you have a good nonpartisan policy.

<http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/developing-and-implementing-nonpartisan-policy>

And then please talk about these issues among yourselves and reach out to us or the state office if you need guidance. We are all counting on one another to keep the League strong and protect its amazing legacy, particularly in challenging times like these.

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