

## JLWV Nonpartisan Policy

The national LWV nonpartisan policy has been in place since 1920. This policy is key to our reputation and it adds strength to the League's position on issues. It enables the League to hold respected, balanced forums and to bring opposing views together for dialogue and discussion.

At the same time, the League is a political organization that encourages members to participate fully in the party or policy issues of their choice (though not as a representative of LWV.)

The Janesville League also has a non-partisan policy, adopted in 1979, which we continue to follow.

### Policy Statement

The League of Women Voters (Janesville) is a nonpartisan organization and makes every effort to maintain that policy. As an organization it does not support or oppose candidates for public office, but acts only on issues chosen by the membership for study and action.

“The League believes that political parties are essential to the American system of government and that the participation of informed citizens is of utmost importance. Consequently, the League encourages its members, as individuals, to be active in political parties and in seeking election to public office. However, nomination papers may NOT be brought to League meetings.

Members of the local League Board of Directors face special obligations in maintaining the nonpartisanship of the organization. During their term of leadership, they shall refrain from engaging in partisan political activity as outlined below. Board members shall resign from the Board of Directors as soon as they make a decision to run for public office. The resignation is made public by the League with an explanation on the nonpartisan nature of the organization and when possible, the name of the person's successor.

A Board family member's activities shall not be considered when deciding whether an activity will affect League's nonpartisanship. The activity being judged is that of the Board member only.

#### **League Board Members *shall not*:**

- Hold office in a political party or organization
- Publicly promote a candidate for government office whether or not the candidate wears a political party label.
- Allow their names to be published in newspaper ads supporting candidates

#### **League Board members may:**

- Belong to a political party
- Contribute financially to a party or candidates privately
- Attend candidate's functions in order to become better informed on candidates and issues (Highly visible Board members should refrain from this activity.)

- Circulate nomination papers. (Highly visible Board members should refrain from this activity.)
- Sign nomination papers. (Highly visible Board members should refrain from this activity.)

What does this mean for most members? ... Most times and places, you may boldly proclaim your LWV membership. However, there are occasions when it is not appropriate.

When doing partisan work, a Leaguer shall not advertise her/his membership in LWV. A League meeting is not the place for a partisan “put-down” discussion. Courtesy and respect for differing positions should be the norm.

When sharing an opinion that differs from a position the League has reached through consensus, clearly identify statements as personal opinion.