
LWV Indiana Webinar

Nonpartisanship & Partnership

Melissa Currence, Board Member of LWVUS



September 30, 2021

Housekeeping

- Add questions to chat
- Keep self on mute except when talking

Agenda

- What does it mean to be really nonpartisan?
- How do we, as League members, get out our nonpartisan message without appearing to support a specific political party?
- What guidelines should we use when choosing partners?
- How do we define roles and tasks when partnering with other organizations?



All are
welcome
to get
involved at
all levels
of League

Sign up for LWVUS' League Leader Update

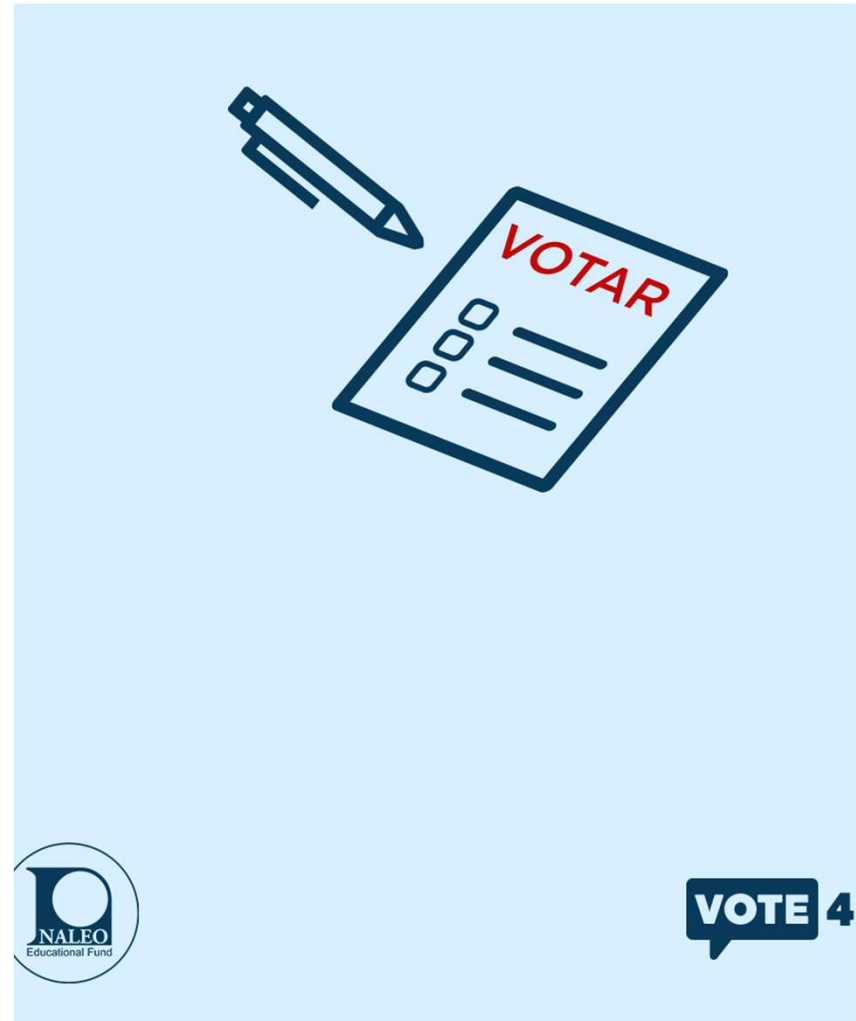
- By-weekly email from LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner
- Subject line always includes "League Update"
- The audience is for League members
- You can forward it via email to fellow members
- Sign up using this form:
http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/league-update



Organizing Network

Each month the national office is inviting League members to convene to strengthen our community and solidarity! We want to continue to foster spaces for cross-learning and relationship building among leagues. Starting in 2021, all Community Calls will take place from 5-6pm ET on the last Tuesday of each month.

www.lwv.org/league-management/monthly-community-calls



Outreach Circle

The League of Women Voters' mission is to empower voters, defend democracy, and serve our communities across the nation.

To make this possible, we need to bring more voices into the conversation. As an organization that envisions a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate, the League must become a more accessible organization.

We must ask ourselves as League members: how can League members and newcomers alike stay connected with the League of Women Voters? How can we mobilize our supporters around important causes?

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/outreachcircle-supporter-kit>

If you are using Outreach Circle, let us know in the chat



LWVUS Nominating Committee

A LWVUS Leadership Opportunity

- Committee approved by National Delegates
- Nominates the next LWVUS Board of Directors to be approved by National Delegates at Convention
- Receives training in ways of selecting leaders with a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lens
- Gets to meet with League Leaders around the Country
- Consults with LWVUS Governance Committee
- Application to apply will be happening this summer/early fall
- Application process will be announced in League Update



Applications due October 29
for LWVUS Board and
Nominating Committee

Opportunities connected to LWVUS Convention

- Two Year Cycle that culminates at National Convention
- Next National Convention is June 2022
- Work Connected to Convention:
 - Bylaws
 - Budget
 - Program
 - And more!
- Attendees have opportunity to connect to other members through caucuses and trainings





Remaining Nonpartisan in Hyper-partisan Times

Nonpartisanship

The League of Women Voters of the United States is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.



Issues Are Not Partisan

- Supporting the democratic processes of registering eligible voters and casting and counting ballots are sacred tools of our democracy.
- Empowering voters who previously have been left out of the process and supporting the anti-racism movement does not mean we are in alliance with one ideological segment of American government; rather, **it means we are doing what we were founded to do: stand up for what is right.**
- Wanting every eligible voter to have equal access to the ballot box is not partisan.
- Wanting a robust democracy in which everyone has an equal voice and equal representation is not partisan. Wanting to see more elected officials that reflect the diverse makeup of our country is not partisan – it is American.



Nonpartisan does not mean apolitical

In the hundred years of the League's existence, we have endured challenges to our democratic principles, policies, and practices.

We witnessed in live video the violation and prevention of rights to American citizens due to racial and structural inequities, and the growing anti-racism movement responding to it. We've observed the pandemic obstacles faced and overcome by our election processes, resulting in the secure, effective elections across the country.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

*passed by LWWUS members
in 2020*



There shall be no barriers to full participation in [the League of Women Voters of the United States] on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

Prioritizing Diversity Equity and Inclusion

- Standing up for these values of DEI is not a partisan narrative but a way to advance inclusion.
- Are we living our values, and are those values aligned with the ideals that we have as a country?
- This self-reflection may be painful. It's difficult to acknowledge that actions taken in the past with the best of intentions may have been hurtful or undermined the values we claim to honor.
- It will require us to be open, transparent, and willing to admit when we are wrong.



Democracy is a Civil Rights Issue

- Our mission to ‘empower voters and defend democracy’ has not changed in our 100 years. What has changed is the need to defend democracy, especially in the face of voter suppression. There is a wealth of misinformation out there that is aimed to divide us as a nation and undermine our democracy. We have to stand up to this attack on our democratic ideals, regardless of what some may say.
- While it may be a challenge, especially at the state and local level, to avoid the appearance of partisanship when publicly addressing racial injustice in this heightened climate, we must.
- We may be accused of being partisan in those moments, but we must stand on the side of justice. It is our moral obligation to demand a more just and equitable world for people of color in our communities.



Remaining Nonpartisan in Hyper-partisan Times

- Webinar: Operating as a Nonpartisan Organization
- <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/leadership-development/webinar-operating-nonpartisan-organization>
- **DEI and Nonpartisanship**
- <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/dei-webinars/january-2021-dei-webinar>



Democracy is a Civil Rights Issue

- We will continue to uphold our nonpartisan values for fairness, justice, and equity because they form the foundation of a representative democracy.
- If we don't strive to dismantle and improve the systems and structures that exclude individuals from their democratic rights to vote and participate, we will never be able to achieve a "democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate."



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

- Those who oppose the reforms and issues the League is working on may claim the League's efforts are partisan to control how the League exercises its influence and power.
- This does not mean the League should curtail its advocacy or limit the public policy issues it works to influence, but rather be mindful of the external environment when deciding how, when, and with whom to engage in public policy activities.



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

- It is up to each League board to evaluate the conditions of its League, as well as the political climate and traditions in its community. It is also up to each League board to determine the risks of partnering with an organization and the impact of that partnership on their work.



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

- **Defining Partnerships:**

- A partnership can take different forms and look a variety of ways. The most common forms of League partnerships are:
 - 1.Planning or hosting events together, such as voter registration drives, educational forums, or candidate forums.
 - 2.Joining formal coalitions that focus on advancing one or more League goals or priorities at the local, state, and national level.
 - 3.Informal/ad hoc relationships in which League leaders may: attend another organization's event; speak at a press conference or rally; invite an organization to speak at a League sponsored event; or speak at another organization's event.



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

What questions should a League ask when considering partnerships:

1. How will this opportunity help the League reach its organizational, strategic, and operational goals?
2. Does this opportunity help the League realize its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice?
3. If it doesn't directly serve our goals or fill an existing gap, is it still worth doing for other reasons?
4. Who is missing from the coalition that should be at the table?
5. Does this partnership bring increased visibility or revenue possibilities to our League?
6. What specific added value can we offer this potential partner?
7. How do our values and priorities align with this partner?



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

What questions should a League ask when considering partnerships:

8. Will this partnership directly benefit or engage our target audiences and/or underrepresented communities?
9. What is the commitment being asked of the League in terms of time and other resources? Is what they're asking of us reasonable and doable for our League?
10. What does our League need from the relationship to make this worth our while?
11. Is this potential partnership with a PAC, c3, c4, etc? How might that shape the nature of their work and the intention for partnering with the League?
12. How does this partnership align with our commitment to our public policy positions?
13. What, if anything, is stipulated in our state or local League bylaws or organizational policies that pertain to partnerships?



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

What questions should a League ask when considering partnerships:

14. What doors would this partnership open for our League? Would this partnership close any doors for our League?
15. Are there partisan organizations involved and if so, is there a political balance within the coalition? Is the coalition large enough and balanced with enough other nonpartisan organizations?
16. Will the coalition as a whole or individual organizations within the coalition be endorsing candidates?
17. What are the risks in relation to foregoing the partnership vs. joining the partnership?



Nonpartisanship & Partnerships

- Full guidance available at
- <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/guidance-leagues-about-nonpartisanship-and-partnerships>



FAQs on Nonpartisanship & Partnership

- **Does the fact that an organization endorses or opposes a political party or candidate mean our League cannot partner with them?**
- LWVUS does not prohibit Leagues from partnering with organizations that endorse or oppose political parties or candidates if the *partnership is nonpartisan in nature but does recommend exercising caution in identifying appropriate opportunities*. Leagues should not belong to or join coalitions or enter into partnerships that are primary focused on supporting or opposing candidates or parties.



FAQs on Nonpartisanship & Partnership

- **Our League participates in a coalition that includes partisan organizations, is that ok?**
- Coalitions are important frameworks to build power and move work. While Leagues should neither lead or initiate coalitions with partisan organizations nor join coalitions that are led by partisan organizations, Leagues may consider joining established coalitions with partisan organizations.

FAQs on Nonpartisanship & Partnership

- **Is supporting Black Lives Matter partisan?**
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) is a movement and is not partisan. Per BLM's webpage, "Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes."
- It is critical that the League stands in solidarity with the black community and lifts up these voices as we work together to fight against systemic racial injustice and inequalities. The League can be a strong ally by standing firm against claims that this work to dismantle systemic racism is partisan, because it simply is not.



FAQs on Nonpartisanship & Partnership

- **Can LWVUS provide a vetted list of nonpartisan organizations or “approved organizations”?**
- LWVUS does not provide a vetted list of nonpartisan organizations to recommend for partnerships. With the ever-changing landscape and new organizations joining the coalitions and partnerships that LWVUS/EF engages in, maintaining this list would be impossible. Additionally, in many cases, organizations operate differently depending on the state and/or community. For instance, a local organization in North Carolina may take on and lead partisan activities, whereas the same affiliate in a different state does not.



FAQs on Nonpartisanship & Partnership

- **Can our League partner with organizations whose board members or staff are former elected officials?**
- LWVUS does not prohibit Leagues from partnering with organizations led by former elected officials. Whether or not the partnership is nonpartisan in nature and the questions above should guide the decision. The main consideration is not the individual's past association or role but whether they are currently serving in a role or at an organization that is aligned with the work of the League.



Remaining Nonpartisan on Social Media

- **IT'S OK TO:**

- Retweet politicians when their tweets align with our advocacy
 - When politicians say or tweet something that aligns with our advocacy, we are still practicing nonpartisanship when we retweet or quote them.
- Have your own political opinions, but be careful if they differ from LWV's positions
 - For your individual account, it's ok to have your own political opinions, but be careful if they differ from those of the organization. Remember, you are a representative of the League.
- Tag and call on politicians to take action that aligns with our advocacy
 - It's also acceptable to tag and call on politicians to take action that aligns with our advocacy or to fill out our voter guides!



Remaining Nonpartisan on Social Media

- **IT'S *NOT* OK TO:**

- Respond to politicians directly
 - It is too partisan to respond to politicians directly on Twitter or on their Facebook page. That's not productive and can turn into a troll fight really quickly.
- Call out a party as being good or bad
 - We don't want to be calling out a party as doing something good or bad, even if as a party they are supporting or opposing something we're advocating for.
- Advocate for how people should vote on candidates
 - We do not want to post anything that indicates how we think people should vote on candidates. Even when we really want a certain candidate to be elected because of their voting rights stance, we must refrain from saying so.
- Retweet or share a political party's post
 - These days, many political parties have organizational social media accounts, not just nationally but statewide and locally as well. We don't want to retweet, share, comment on, or interact with these posts in any way. It's fine to follow these accounts, but make sure you're following ALL of them and not just one party.

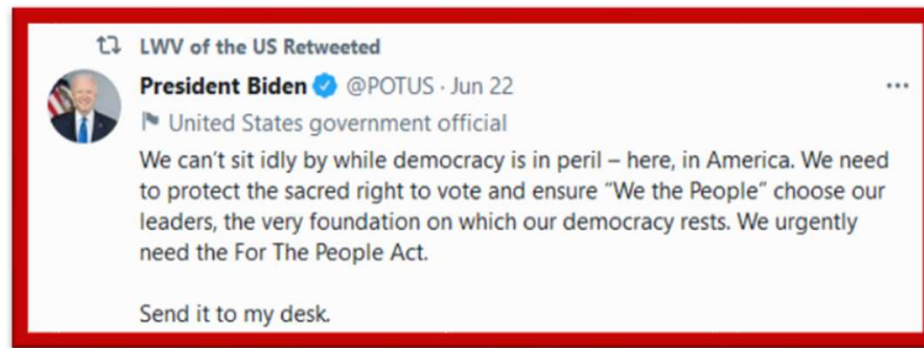


Remaining Nonpartisan on Social Media

During Election Season on Social Media

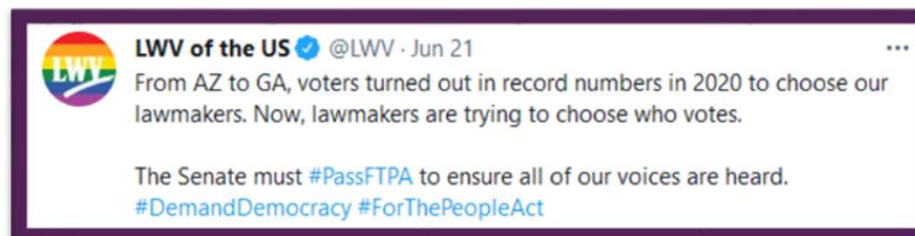
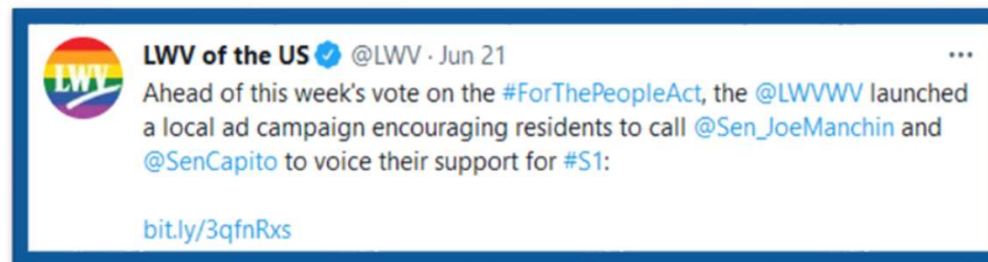
- we recommend that you **refrain from retweeting or sharing any candidate posts once someone has declared their candidacy for an office.**
- The driving principle here is that we cannot provide an uneven platform for candidates running for office.
- During a debate, it's okay to live tweet and tag candidates, but you must make sure you are giving equal weight to each candidate when you do this. It's also still okay to tag candidates in your social media posts to pressure them to fill out your voter guide.

Remaining Nonpartisan on Social Media



**Retweeted politician
(not a candidate)
whose tweet aligns
with our advocacy**

**Calls on
politicians to take
action aligned with
our advocacy**



**Does not call
out a party**



Remaining Nonpartisan on Social Media

- Full guide: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/nonpartisanship-social-media>



Lens for League Participation in Marches & Events

The following criteria was established by the Board in 2017 to help the League identify top priorities and determine at what level we will or will not participate in a variety of events.

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/guides/criteria-league-participation-marches-events>



Lens for League Participation in Marches & Events

- The event truly aligns with the core Making Democracy Work® issues
- The organizers of the event are transparent in their planning and the event is nonpartisan
- The event advances one or more of the League's strategic goals
- What risks are associated with participation and can LWVUS secure the appropriate insurance?
- Inclusion and diverse participation is a core focus of the event planning
- LWVUS volunteers and/or staff have the bandwidth for supporting the needs of participation
- What is the potential for earned media and other visibility?
- What access would the League have to names and emails of event attendees?
- Should the League seek speaking opportunities or take other leadership to shape the event?



Lens for League Participation in Marches & Events – Levels of Engagement

If and how we participate in future events will fall into the following levels of engagement:

1. LWVUS will partner and lead.

For events that support the League's key priorities, participation may include sponsorship, co-branding, staff coordination on the ground, official speaking roles, other leadership activities as well as sister-event participation.

2. LWVUS will participate but not lead.

LWVUS, state and local Leagues will participate in events with board support.

3. LWVUS will not participate but other levels of League may.

For events that do not rise to the occasion of full League participation but meet a variety of our criteria, LWVUS will not coordinate but will welcome state and local participation.

4. No Leagues will participate.

For events that do not advance the key priorities of the League, are deemed too partisan or risky, LWVUS will mandate that these events are not appropriate for any official League participation. Members who want to take part in these events may do so as individuals. We request no use of the League brand or logo at these events.



Connect to LWFVUS

- Sign up for League Update email using this form:
http://participate.lwv.org/signup_page/league-update

Guide to LWFVUS Services for Leagues

- <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/policies-guidelines/guide-lwvus-services-leagues>

Reach Out to LWFVUS Board Liaison to Indiana

- Melissa Currence, mcurrence@lwv.org

- Connect to LWFVUS:

Outreach Circle <https://outreachcircle.com/TQF340>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters>

Twitter <https://twitter.com/lwv>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/leagueofwomenvoters/>