

# **NATIONAL WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT POLICY**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Supporting and endorsing feminist women candidates, at all levels of government, is the major function of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), the National Women's Political Caucus Parity Political Action Committee (NWPC-Parity PAC), the National Women's Political Planning and Appointments Committee (PPAC), and NWPC state and local caucuses. The Board of Directors of the National Women's Political Caucus has adopted the following policies to direct both the endorsement process and funding decisions of all NWPC entities in federal and certain non-federal races, and in convention, has extended to state and local caucuses NWPC's exclusive consideration of women candidates only.

The NWPC, since its formation, has dedicated itself to giving the maximum assistance possible to women seeking public office. The NWPC and NWPC Parity PAC attempts to become involved in women's races as early as possible when the help is most needed by the candidate.

This endorsement policy specifies the minimum requirements for candidates seeking NWPC endorsement. These requirements do not restrict local and state caucuses from including other pertinent issues in their screening and endorsement process as long as those issues do not conflict with the goals and purposes of NWPC or the core endorsement criteria of ERA, choice and childcare/dependent care (elaborated in Section II [H][1]).

The original NWPC statement of purpose emphasizes the need to cross party lines when necessary, and work outside the formal political parties to elect women. LOCAL AND STATE CAUCUSES THEREFORE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR ENDORSEMENT PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA PROTECT THE MULTI-PARTISAN MAKEUP OF THE NWPC. Including partisan positions which are not related to NWPC bottom line issues as endorsement criteria can only hurt the organization's larger goal of electing feminist women to office. Likewise, expanding the endorsement criteria to cover issues which are not central to our mission as feminists can only dilute our effectiveness, and are not allowed.

## **II. ELIGIBILITY FOR ENDORSEMENT AND FUNDING BY ALL NWPC ENTITIES**

- A. **ELIGIBILITY:** Only women candidates are eligible for endorsement and funding by NWPC Parity PAC. This eligibility criterion shall extend to the state and local caucus endorsements and funding. Eligible candidates may be either incumbents running for re-election, challengers, or running in open seats.
  
- B. **FEDERAL RACES:** The NWPC reserves to itself the sole right to endorse in federal races and to determine the level of NWPC Parity PAC direct funding. State Caucuses will make endorsement (or non- endorsement) recommendations to NWPC National for federal candidates from their states. However, state or local caucuses may only add their endorsement to federal candidates who have been endorsed by NWPC National. A failure by a state to make a recommendation will not preclude National NWPC consideration.

All direct funding of NWPC endorsed federal candidates must be done through the NWPC Parity PAC to ensure that organizational limits set by law are not exceeded. State and local caucuses wishing to support NWPC endorsed federal candidates may donate to the NWPC Parity PAC. Such donations must be within federal limits and cannot be targeted to specific candidates. State and local caucuses may also encourage individual members to support federal candidates by direct contributions to their campaigns.

- C. NON-FEDERAL RACES: If recommended by a state caucus, NWPC endorsement and NWPC Parity PAC funding of candidates for the following non-federal offices will be considered:
  - 1. Governor
  - 2. Statewide Constitutional Office (*e.g.*, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, etc.)
  - 3. Mayor of a major city (with a population of 250,000 or more)NOTE: NWPC National will not endorse in state legislative races.
  
- D. NWPC endorsement of a candidate is granted for a specific race only and remains in effect as long as the candidate is in the race, unless withdrawn for cause.
  
- E. NWPC National does not grant “primary only” endorsements.
  
- F. Dual Endorsements by National:
  - 1. There will be no dual endorsements of candidates within the same political party.
  - 2. With the assent of two thirds of those present and voting, the Political Planning and Appointments Committee (PPAC) may recommend for endorsement candidates from more than one political party in the same race.
  
- G. To be eligible for NWPC National endorsement, a candidate must have shown serious intent to run by:
  - 1. Officially announcing for the office sought, or
  - 2. Filing the name of a campaign treasurer with the appropriate state or federal office (*e.g.*, the FEC).
  
- H. A candidate presented for NWPC endorsement must meet the following standards:
  - 1. Support the NWPC goals and purposes and these specific issues:

- a. Support passage of an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution providing that equal rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex.
  - b. (i) Support a woman's right to choose an abortion as established by the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade.
  - (ii) Support public policies that guarantee equal access to abortion and to a full range of reproductive health services, including those provided under federal funding.
  - c. Support increased access to quality affordable childcare and other dependent care programs funded from all available sources.
2. Have a past record indicating support for NWPC's goals, purposes and bottom line issues either in prior or current elective office or in community leadership activities.
  3. Be willing to make the NWPC endorsement known.
  4. Have a strong feminist campaign message; substantial campaign resources in money, staff, and volunteers; and a strong presence in her district.
- I. To be eligible for funding from the NWPC Parity PAC, the candidate must have shown a credible record and campaign resources and strategy (per III.A.7). Items supporting such determination may include: candidate's commitment of personal resources; percentage of small contributions; percentage of contributions from within the district; paid professional staff in the campaign (not just fundraising); evidence of leadership skills and community popularity; substantial plan to raise funds needed. This information may be requested in addition to the questionnaire.
  - J. Once a candidate has been endorsed by the NWPC, she is eligible for consideration at any meeting of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee for new or additional NWPC Parity PAC funding, as long as the appropriate information has been submitted to the National Office by the recommending entity and forwarded to the Committee.

### III. STANDARD PROCEDURES FOR ENDORSEMENT

#### A. NWPC NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Pursuant to the NWPC Bylaws, the Vice President for Political Planning and Appointments chairs the Political Planning and Appointments Committee and works with staff to gather information needed for the committee to make recommendations to the NWPC National Board on endorsement and funding of candidates. The PPAC delegates to

the Coalition for Women's Appointments the authority and responsibility for the recruitment and vetting of applicants for federal political appointments. The PPAC may be asked to consider an endorsement of a potential appointee and will work with the Coalition as appropriate.

2. Endorsement and funding requests by state caucuses will be considered and evaluated by the NWPC Political Planning and Appointments Committee at scheduled meetings where a quorum is present (see Section V for exceptions). The Political Planning and Appointments Committee will make recommendations to the NWPC Board for endorsement and funding by NWPC Parity PAC.

3. In federal races or in races under Section II (C) where no state caucus exists, NWPC will provide the candidate with the necessary timelines, procedures for endorsement, and access to the National Questionnaire, which will be submitted directly to the National Office.

4. When NWPC receives candidate information, that information will be copied back to the state caucus, if it exists, and will be accompanied by a request that the state caucus review the application and make a recommendation on an endorsement. National will notify state caucuses immediately when endorsing a candidate from that state. If there is no state caucus, or a state caucus is unable to review the application, the PPAC shall determine the endorsement recommendation.

5. If NWPC National receives information from a state caucus which conflicts with its candidate information, National shall consult with the State caucus to resolve the discrepancies. National shall respond in writing with its final resolution of the discrepancies.

6. Information required for NWPC endorsement in federal races: The NWPC staff will ensure that candidates' questionnaires are supplied to the Political Planning and Appointments Committee. The questionnaires must include or be accompanied by the following information, except for subsection e, below:

- a. Candidate's written statement of support for the goals and purposes of NWPC and the issues stated in Section II (H)(1).
- b. Biographical information on or resume of the candidate.
- c. Dates of the primary, runoff (if any) and the general elections.
- d. Names of all other viable candidates running for the office.

e. Informational requirements may be waived if a candidate is not requesting funding and is a previously endorsed incumbent running for the same office who signs a statement that her position on NWPC bottom line issues has not changed.

7. Additional Information Requirements for NWPC Parity PAC Funding in Federal Races: The NWPC staff and/or committee members will provide the following additional information to the Political Planning and Appointments Committee, as may be appropriate.

- a. Status of the incumbent, if applicable.
- b. Past election results for the office and the presidential election results of the past two elections for the geographic area involved.
- c. The candidate's voting record if she has previously held elective office.
- d. Polling data on the race, if available.
- e. Total cash raised from all sources, total expenditures, and cash on hand.
- f. A review of the candidate's website and social media, if possible.

8. All meetings of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee are open to any member of the National Women's Political Caucus, except for a candidate herself under consideration or members of her campaign staff. The Committee reserves the right to hold executive sessions as provided by Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised. Discussions held in executive session shall remain confidential. All questionnaires will remain in NWPC files and are confidential except for National PPAC or State PAC members where necessary to make a recommendation.

9. The following direction shall be disseminated to all members of endorsement screening committees throughout NWPC:

As a member of your chapter's Political Action Screening Committee, you may be working with highly confidential and personal information related to candidates, and their campaign's strategic plan(s). To promote a secure and confidential environment for candidates appearing before the screening committee, members are expected to comply with the following:

Members are not to share with anyone any strategic, identifying, or personal information appearing on candidate questionnaires, or in supplemental materials or information gained through the interview process. This includes, but is not limited to, opposing candidates, employees, family, or friends.

Members of the Screening Committee who are actively working, consulting, or have a relationship with the campaign of any candidate, must disclose such information and shall not attend the screening for that race nor receive such materials from any candidate in that race.

B. STATE CAUCUS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NWPC ENDORSEMENT IN FEDERAL RACES:  
States will provide NWPC National with their filing deadlines and primary election dates. They will make their recommendations for endorsement and re-endorsement of incumbents. States are encouraged to submit recommendations as early as possible. However, a failure by a state to make a recommendation will not preclude National NWPC consideration.

If a state caucus receives candidate information from NWPC National that conflicts with its candidate information, the state has a responsibility to inform NWPC of the discrepancies as soon as such discrepancies are discovered.

C. STATE CAUCUS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR NWPC NATIONAL ENDORSEMENT IN NON-FEDERAL RACES

1. State caucuses will provide their requests for endorsement and re-endorsement of incumbents. States are encouraged to submit their requests for endorsement or re-endorsement as early as possible.

2. In order to comply with state election law requirements, NWPC Parity PAC funding requests by states for non-federal races must be accompanied by information about the procedures necessary for making contributions to that race and confirmation that contributions from a federal PAC are permissible in that race.

3. The state and/or local caucus should identify how they plan to support their candidate.

4. Requirements for NWPC Endorsement:

a. A questionnaire, except as provided in subsection (d), below.

b. Endorsement by the state caucus, where one exists. In the event that no state caucus is available to provide a recommendation, NWPC generally will not endorse for any race for state or mayoral office. In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the PPAC chair, the PPAC may consider such an endorsement request.

c. Dates of the primary, runoff (if any) and the general election.

d. A questionnaire may be waived if a state caucus is requesting endorsement but is not requesting funding of a previously endorsed incumbent running for the same office, if provided with a signed statement from the incumbent that her positions on NWPC's bottom line issues have not changed.

5. Additional Information Requirements for NWPC Parity PAC Funding:

- a. Status of the incumbent, if applicable.
- b. Past election results for the office and the presidential election results of the past two elections for the geographic area involved.
- c. The candidate's voting record if she has previously held elective office.
- d. Polling data on the race, if available.
- e. The specific amount of funding requested and how it will be used.

6. To request additional NWPC Parity PAC funding for a currently endorsed candidate, a state must submit the request to the National Office for the consideration of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee and must provide:

- a. An update of the political progress of the campaign.
- b. The specific amount of additional funding requested and how it will be used.

#### **IV. NWPC SUPPORT TO ENDORSED CANDIDATES**

- A. Basic support: All candidates receiving an NWPC endorsement will be notified by National that they have been endorsed and will be promoted as an NWPC endorsed candidate.
- B. Funding: Financial support by NWPC Parity PAC will be given to candidates based on recommendations of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee, as may be approved by the Board.
- C. The President, President-Elect, designated spokesperson, or PAC/Political Planning Chair of any Caucus entity may not publicly endorse or support an opponent of a Caucus endorsed candidate for any level of public office. Under no circumstances may any member use the Caucus name, even for identification purposes, in support of an unendorsed candidate.

#### **V. EXCEPTIONS TO STANDARD PROCEDURES**



A. An endorsement request or recommendation may be presented between regularly scheduled meetings of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee. In exceptional situations (*e.g.*, the candidate is running in a special election or there are other time-sensitive factors), the Committee may consider and recommend endorsement and/or funding through an interim expedited endorsement procedure:

1. At her discretion, the Political Planning and Appointments Committee Chair may have the National office inform the Committee members of requests for endorsement from candidates in exceptional circumstances. The request must provide the candidate(s)' questionnaire(s) and background about the race(s) to the Committee members for their consideration and early response by email regarding endorsement and/or funding.
2. Should there be a favorable vote by a majority of the members of the Committee, supported by a report of the email vote, the Chair of the Political Planning and Appointments Committee shall recommend endorsement and/or funding to the NWPC National Board Executive Committee, as appropriate, for its decision.
3. Endorsement requests originating from a state must be submitted to the National Office in writing or electronically and include the information required in Section III (C).
4. All records of votes by email shall be maintained by the National Office in the same manner as other PPAC records are maintained.

B. When a question is raised that an endorsement action by a state or local caucus on a candidate eligible for National endorsement was done in a manner that was unfair, or violated NWPC procedures, or conflicted with the goals of the NWPC, a grievance may be filed by a member of the National Board or NWPC State Chair under the Grievance Procedure (Attachment 1). The PPAC will implement the Grievance Procedure to deal with the question.

## **VI. CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

The candidate questionnaire, which is found at [www.nwpc.org](http://www.nwpc.org) (Political Action), is an integral part of this Endorsement Policy for federal office and the language may not be modified.

## **VII. ENDORSEMENT POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The NWPC Political Planning and Appointments Committee will review the NWPC Candidate Endorsement Policy biennially and recommend any changes to the Board. Any changes requested in the STANDARDS OF ENDORSEMENT, SECTION (II) (H) (I) (Specific Issues) must be ratified by the Convention.