

## AARP'S POLICY ON POLITICAL OR PARTISAN ACTIVITY

**Preamble** AARP has earned a reputation for objectivity, balance and non-partisanship. This reputation, although deserved, is extremely fragile. Therefore, people in leadership positions need to be aware of circumstances that could call in to question AARP's fundamental value of non-partisanship and act accordingly. AARP must maintain a non-partisan stance, with respect to candidates, incumbents, political parties and public events.

**Policy** The AARP Board of Directors, the National Policy Council, Regional Volunteer Directors, State Presidents (and certain volunteers because of their prominence), and designated staff\* as defined herein, shall not take part in any public political or partisan activity that may be construed by the public as an AARP endorsement of political parties, incumbents, or candidates for federal, state, or major municipal offices.

All other staff and volunteers shall consider the sensitivity of their particular portfolio when considering participation in political or partisan activities. See Operating Guidelines below for details.

### OPERATING GUIDELINES

**Definition** Political activity is defined as participating in or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office or any political party. Partisan activity goes beyond the statutory definition of political activity. Partisan activity is defined as being a supporter of, showing partiality to or bias towards a specific person or party, not limited to political candidates or parties during a campaign or election cycle.

**Scope** This policy applies to all AARP staff and volunteers when they are engaged in an employment, volunteer or other formal relationship with AARP.

**Designated Volunteers and Staff** The following people, as a result of the visibility of their position, shall scrupulously avoid any conflict, real or perceived, direct or indirect, between their own individual, professional, or business interests and the interests of AARP: the AARP Board of Directors, the National Policy Council, Regional Volunteer Directors, State Presidents (and certain volunteers because of their prominence), and designated staff\*. Public political activities to be avoided by members in this group include, but are not limited to, circulating petitions for candidates; hosting political campaign events such as coffees or forums; or displaying candidate or party buttons, bumper stickers, etc. After such consideration, they may, on their own time, away from AARP offices and events:

- Sign candidate petitions
- Attend candidate coffees, forums, etc.
- Contribute to parties
- Contribute to candidates

**Other Volunteers and Staff** All other staff and volunteers shall consider the sensitivity of their particular portfolio when considering participation in political or partisan activities. After such consideration, they may, on their own time, away from AARP offices and events:

- Sign candidate petitions
- Attend candidate coffees, forums, etc.
- Contribute to parties
- Contribute to candidates
- Circulate candidate petitions
- Distribute candidate literature
- Display campaign buttons, bumper stickers, etc.
- Host candidate coffees

**Consultation** Board members who are considering appointment to any federal, state or major municipal level office should consult with the Board Chair, who will convene a meeting of the AARP President, and the General Counsel. Other volunteers and staff should consult with their volunteer/staff supervisors and the General Counsel. In addition, for situations that may not be clear, the Board Chair or volunteer/staff supervisor and the General Counsel should also be consulted.

**Resignation** Board members, key volunteers and designated staff considering a more active political role are required to resign when they (1) decide to run for federal, state, or major municipal level elective office (whether partisan or nonpartisan); or (2) plan to work publicly on a candidate's campaign for a federal, state or major municipal level office.

**Reconsideration** For Board members, request for possible exceptions to the application of this policy should be submitted in writing to the General Counsel. A determination will be made by the General Counsel, Chairman of the Board, and AARP President. A Board member wishing to have a final review of a decision by the foregoing group can submit a written letter to the full Board. For staff and other volunteers, they should submit a written request for review to their next level supervisor.

\* Designated AARP staff include: Executive and Leadership Team members; Staff with titles of Director-level and above in the following groups: State & National, Integrated Value & Strategy, Integrated Communications, Brand & Thought Leadership, and Policy Strategy & International Affairs; Government Relations and Advocacy Managers; State Operations Advocacy staff; and other designated staff because of their prominence in the public as an AARP employee

*Approved by the AARP Board of Directors, April 2005*