



PTA & ELECTIONS

Voting is the Foundation of Democracy

PTA members care about children & their issues – not just our own, but every child.

Because the purpose of PTA includes advocating for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth, as well as fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding...

PTA has an important role in elections.

- **Register voters. Encourage voting and civic engagement.**
- **Host candidate forums.**
- **Develop & publish candidate questionnaires.**
- **Furnish voter information and resources.**
- **Support or oppose ballot measures, which may include signature-gathering.**



PTA is a noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan 501(c)(3) IRS tax-exempt organization, so we do not, in our official capacities – directly or indirectly – participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

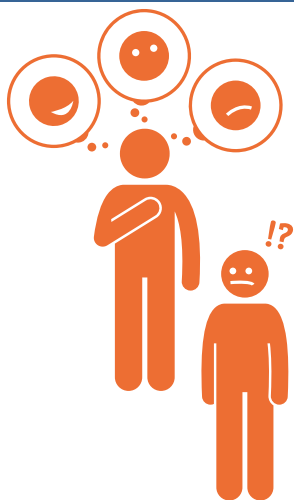
PTA does NOT, as a non-profit organization ...

- ...endorse or help a candidate or political party -- even those running for school board or other nonpartisan offices.
- ...allow only one candidate to speak at a meeting - ALL must be invited, and more than one must attend.
- ...ask a candidate to sign a pledge.
- ...distribute or wear campaign materials/paraphernalia at a PTA event.

[See tips for how your bylaws can protect your PTA on page 2.](#)

Guidance for PTA Leaders & Members

- Leaders and members may campaign as individuals, but not at a PTA event.
- Current or former PTA board members must not use their PTA title or the name of the PTA to endorse a candidate, even if just for purposes of identification. For example, in a published list of supporters of Mike for Mayor, it's OK to include your name, "Susie Smith", but NOT "Susie Smith, President, Sunshine Valley PTA".
- PTA leaders should consider whether privately endorsing a candidate (without using a PTA title) might negatively affect a future relationship with an elected official should the other candidate win.
- PTA leaders running for office may continue to serve in their official capacities and can include the fact that they have served as a PTA leader in their bio. They may not discuss or promote their candidacy at PTA events.



HELP!

Candidates for public office are showing up at my PTA meetings and “speaking to the issues” as an excuse to make stealth campaign speeches!



PTA leaders try to maintain respect for the established policies that govern the activities of all PTAs. But what do you do if a candidate for political office shows up at PTA meeting and tries to hijack the floor?

PTA Bylaws Also Protect You

People other than PTA members are encouraged to attend PTA meetings, but the participation of these guests is limited. According to our California State PTA bylaws (Article VI, Section 13):

“The privilege of making motions, debating, and voting at local unit meetings shall be limited to members of the association who are present and whose dues are paid and who have been members of the association for at least the previous thirty (30) days.”

So, if a candidate for public office shows up and enters the discussion inappropriately, the President is well within the rules to remind the speaker that campaigning at a PTA meeting is a violation of PTA policy and non-profit law and that only dues-paying members are permitted to speak to the motions.



Being a member of one PTA association doesn't give you voting rights at another school's PTA!

Prevention

More info on PTA Use of School Facilities



- Make sure you have a Facilities Use Permit on file with your school district if your meetings are on campus – this allows you to set the meeting rules, including a discussion of PTA advocacy activities and positions on issues.
- Post a notice in the entries saying that campaigning on behalf of any candidate or political party is not permitted – this includes wearing paraphernalia or distributing campaign materials. Note this in your meeting agenda, too.
- Remind PTA leaders and members who are also candidates that while they may proceed as usual to act in their official capacities, they must be careful not to promote their candidacy at PTA events.