

Political Events

Updated 2023

Chapman University adheres to IRS regulations concerning the [Restriction of Political Campaign Intervention by Section 501\(c\)\(3\) Tax-Exempt Organizations](#). The following excerpts provide guidance for student organizations in navigating those regulations; however, please work directly with your SOA or GLA on any political event, at least 4-6 weeks prior to the event to discuss the specific circumstances of your event.

Voter Education, Voter Registration, and Get Out the Vote Drives

Recognized student organizations may coordinate voter education activities (including public forums, the publication of voter education guides, and voter registration drives) if they are carried out in a non-partisan manner. Voter education or registration activities conducted in a biased manner that favors (or opposes) one or more candidates is prohibited. Recognized student organizations should also know that Argyros Forum Student Union regularly coordinates such activities and that collaboration on such efforts is encouraged.

Hosting Candidates in their Capacity as a Political Candidate

When inviting a candidate to speak in their capacity as a political candidate, student groups must:

- Provide an equal opportunity to participate to all political candidates seeking the same office (this applies to both the nature of the event to which each candidate is invited, as well as the manner of their presentation/promotion); •
- Refrain from supporting or opposing a candidate both prior to, during, and after their visit;
- Prohibit political fundraising from occurring for any/all candidate

Hosting Candidates When Appearing/Speaking as Non-Candidates

When inviting a public figure to speak because they currently hold, or formerly held, public office, is considered an expert in a non-political field, or has led a distinguished military, legal, or public service career, student groups should:

- Be explicit in their communication with the candidate that they are speaking in a noncandidate capacity;
- Refrain from mentioning the individual's potential future candidacy for public office (both prior to, during, and after their visit);

- Maintain a non-partisan atmosphere where the candidate is present

Issue Advocacy vs. Political Campaign Intervention

Organizations may take positions on public policy issues, including issues that divide candidates in an election for public office. However, organizations must avoid any issue advocacy that is perceived as campaigning. Even if a statement does not expressly tell an audience to vote for or against a specific candidate, an organization delivering the statement is at risk of violating the political campaign intervention prohibition if there is any message favoring or opposing a candidate. This includes, but is not limited to, statements identifying the candidate's name, showing a picture of the candidate, referring to political party affiliations, or other distinctive features of a candidate's platform or biography.

- Some of the key factors used in determining whether communication results in political campaign intervention include identification of one or more candidates for a given public office; expressing approval or disapproval for one or more candidates' positions and/or actions; is delivered close in time to the election; refers to voting or an election
- Communication is particularly at risk of being political campaign intervention when it refers to candidates or voting in a specific upcoming election