



How to Advocate for Democracy as a 501(c)(3) Organization

MEETING THE MOMENT 2026



LDAD is a **501(c)(3) nonprofit** and therefore must comply with all applicable requirements to ensure the organization stays within its charitable purpose and does not engage in prohibited political activity.

If you are speaking on behalf of LDAD or asking others to speak out or advocate on behalf of LDAD, please review and follow the guidelines below.

Allowed: Issue Advocacy and Education

A 501(c)(3) **may**:

- Speak out on **public issues**, including, for example, LDAD's core issues regarding the protection of democracy, the rule of law, the justice system, and protecting our democratic institutions.
- **Educate the public** on issues aligned with our mission.
- Publish or distribute **nonpartisan research**, reports, or policy analysis.
- Take positions on **legislation** (within IRS limits—see below).

Examples of Permissible Advocacy:

- Publishing a **nonpartisan report** about the effects of a proposed law.
- Organizing public conversations and presentations **to discuss LDAD's core issues**, as long as the discussion cannot be construed as partisan political activity.
- Encouraging the public to vote or register to vote and **engaging in nonpartisan get-out-the-vote efforts**.
- Contacting **state executive and regulatory agencies** about policy proposals, or otherwise communicating with executive branch officials.
- Sharing **nonpartisan research and analysis** with Congress, including by testifying at hearings and educating staffers.
- **Writing all members of Congress for educational purposes** (i.e. to explain a piece of legislation), without advocating for them to vote a particular way and without targeting members from a particular party.

****Please note:** If you choose to sign a petition, or endorse or oppose specific legislation, you may only do so in a personal capacity and not on behalf of LDAD.

Prohibited: Lobbying

LDAD does not participate in lobbying. Although 501(c)(3) organizations may engage in a limited amount of lobbying if it is considered an “insubstantial” part of overall activities, LDAD does not monitor or allocate activities for this purpose and, therefore, does not conduct any lobbying.

Prohibited: Political Campaign Activity

A 501(c)(3) may **not**:

- **Support or oppose any candidate** for public office.
- Make **endorsements, donations, or public statements** in favor of or against a candidate.
- Allow its resources (staff time, facilities, mailing lists) to be used for **partisan political activity**.
- Engage in **electioneering**, even if the communication is issue-based but timed to influence an election.
- Make a direct **request to a legislative body to vote** in a particular way.

Examples of Prohibited Campaign Activity:

- "Candidate X supports our issue—**vote for them!**"
- Hosting or supporting attendance at a **debate that features only one party's candidate(s) or favoring primarily voters/members of one party** in an event invitation list.
- **Distributing voter guides** that rate the candidates or their positions in a biased way.
- Recommending that **people vote a certain way or contact their elected officials to urge them to vote a certain way**.
- Engaging in **personal attacks or commentary** unrelated to policy or official actions that could be viewed as partisan.

Final Notes

- **Context and timing matter.** Even issue advocacy may be considered political if it aligns too closely with a candidate's campaign platform during an election cycle.
- **Ask yourself:** is the event I want to speak at or otherwise support hosted by or for a political *party*?
- **When in doubt, consult LDAD leadership** before issuing statements, organizing advocacy, or using LDAD's name or resources.