GSUSA Guidance on Election Rules for 501(c)(3) Organizations

Quick-Reference Guide for Girl Scout Staff & Volunteers

As tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organizations, GSUSA and councils have limitations that prevent them from supporting individual candidates or political parties or engaging in other, specific partisan actions that could influence an election. However, there are many nonpartisan activities that are allowable.

This document is a reference for staff and volunteers to safely navigate participation during election season while following the restrictions placed on tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations by the IRS.

When acting as a representative of Girl Scouts, please adhere to the following guidelines:

Please Note:

Permitted Activities

- Participating in nonpartisan voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote campaigns.
- Conducting nonpartisan voter education.
- Updating your elected officials or other policymakers on GSUSA's or your council's work.
- Inviting your elected officials to major GSUSA or council events in their official capacity – such as Gold Award Ceremonies – but be cautious not to make it a political event.
- Teaching Girl Scouts about the importance of participating in the election process.

Prohibited Activities

- Endorsing, campaigning for, or otherwise intervening in the election of any candidate to a federal, state, or local public office.
- Providing any financial or in-kind contributions to a candidate, party, or Political Action Committee (PACs).
- Distributing flyers, newsletters, signage, or other campaign materials.
- Hosting, attending, or participating in campaign events.
- Using GSUSA or council resources (e.g., computers, phones, email lists) for any campaign-related activities.
- Resharing, retweeting, or otherwise recirculating social media content posted by a candidate or campaign – even if it mentions Girl Scouts.

- GSUSA and councils may have additional restrictions not reflected in this document. GSUSA staff and volunteers should follow GSUSA guidelines for permitted activities, and council staff and volunteers should follow their council's guidelines and obtain permission from their council for permitted activities.
- The restrictions outlined in this document apply when you are acting as an employee or volunteer of Girl Scouts. You are not prohibited from participating in campaign activities in your personal capacity and on your own time. However, you may not use Girl Scout resources or wear Girl Scouts insignia to do so.

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