

## Policy on Advocacy

501(c)(3) organizations may engage in many forms of advocacy on issues, including nonpartisan election-related activity. However, 501(c)(3) resources may not be used for partisan political activities, including supporting or opposing a political party or organization and supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

Social Venture Partners Boulder County (SVP) may engage in advocacy activity, or active support or education for a cause, idea, issue, or policy. It is the policy of SVP to advocate on public policy issues that support its mission to elevate philanthropy to create a network of stronger, more sustainable Boulder County nonprofits.

### Criteria for Public Policy Positions

SVP may take positions on public policy issues that fulfill at least one of these three basic criteria:

- The issue(s) affect SVP's ability to work toward its mission
- The issue(s) affect SVP's Partner members or nonprofit clients
- The issue(s) affects SVP's status or its operations

### Process for Determining Positions

Advocacy positions on specific issues will be determined on a case-by-case basis by vote of the Board of Directors.

- Any party requesting a Board vote on an advocacy issue shall submit a formal request form to the Board Chair. The completed form will outline:
  - the issue,
  - the case for and against the issue,
  - and, the case for how the issue fits within the criteria listed above.
- The Board Chair will take the request to the Executive Committee for consideration of inclusion on the next Board meeting agenda.
- If referred to the Board, it will be added to the next month's agenda.
- The submitting party may be asked to:
  - present the issue at the Board meeting,
  - supply links to external resources for additional information on both sides of the issue,
  - and, contribute to organizational writings on the topic.
- The Board Chair will share the results of the process with the submitting party.
- If a position is taken, staff will coordinate communications related to the organization's position.

### Action on Positions

At a minimum, SVP staff will announce and coordinate general education on any position taken by the organization. Education may include blog posts, newsletter articles, website content, social media posts, talking points, opinion letters to the editor, white papers, guest content, public appearances by an individual approved to speak on behalf of SVP, and other commensurate activities.

SVP Board and staff may also choose, based on internal capacity, to engage in a wide array of IRS-approved advocacy activities such as signing on to letters, public will campaigns, policymaker education, community organizing, and work in coalitions/associations.

### **Nonpartisanship**

Clients and Partner members of SVP represent a broad cross-section of the political spectrum. SVP does not support one candidate over another candidate; and does not support any political parties. SVP works with all political parties in legislative efforts. If it asks one candidate for office to speak at events or conferences, an invitation is extended to any opposing candidates as well.

### **Partisan Political Activities**

While representing SVP Boulder County, staff, Partner members, and other volunteers may engage in issue advocacy that has been approved by the organization. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, none of SVP's staff time or resources can be used for partisan political purposes—that is, to support or oppose any candidate running for public office. This is a strict prohibition and any perceived violation could result in a costly investigation by the public, media and/or IRS, and possibly the loss of tax-exempt status.

Staff, Partner members, and other volunteers shall avoid the following activities while representing SVP:

- Making statements that favor or oppose candidates or political parties at any SVP event or meeting or in any SVP official publication, including the website.
- Posting comments that favor or oppose candidates or political parties on any SVP social media, including our blogs, Facebook page, Twitter accounts (including staff accounts that are associated with SVP), etc.
- Allowing a candidate, political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way to use our space without charge.
- Giving a candidate political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way any SVP mailing list.
- Forwarding an email from a candidate, political party, PAC or any partisan political group that came to their SVP email account. Do not use a SVP email address to subscribe to candidate or political material.
- Viewing candidate, party or other political events or advertisements online on an SVP computer.
- Making statements or handing out literature supportive or critical of a candidate, political party or PAC at an SVP event.
- Using the copier or postage machine to make copies of campaign materials or to mail them.
- Making or receiving telephone calls in support or opposition of a candidate using SVP's phones. If you receive such calls at work, advise the caller to call you at home or on your cell phone in the evening or on the weekend.
- Wearing political buttons or t-shirts while representing SVP at any event or meeting or in the office.
- Putting partisan political signs, bumper stickers or political buttons up in your office area or office window.
- Paying for or attending political events hosted by political parties, campaigns, or other entities.

*Note: These organizational prohibitions do not inhibit individual participation in election activities, provided staff/Partner members/volunteers do not use any SVP resources to act or represent that they are acting as an employee, partner member, volunteer, officer or Board member of SVP.*