

## **Rules for Candidate Engagement: Do's and Don'ts for ADA Volunteers and Staff**

Because the American Diabetes Association (Association) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, our time and other resources cannot be used for partisan political purposes, such as supporting or opposing any candidate for public office at the federal, state, or local levels. This is a broad prohibition: You might violate the restriction even if you do not expressly urge a vote for or against a particular candidate, but merely imply which candidate is “better” on an issue. Any perceived violation of this strict prohibition could result in a costly investigation by the public, media, and/or the IRS and, placing our tax-exempt status in jeopardy.

This prohibition extends to anyone employed by or representing the Association, including our volunteers and advocates. Do not look to other groups for examples of what you can and cannot do, as some of these groups, such as the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and Alzheimer's Association, have 501(c)(4) tax status, which allows them to participate in partisan activity.

### **Examples of what you *CAN* do in connection with your role with the Association:**

- Raise issues that affect people with diabetes and ask candidates where they stand, without noting support or opposition to a candidate based on the answer.
- Educate candidates on diabetes and the Association's advocacy positions.

You can do these things at events sponsored by or featuring candidates provided the event isn't a fundraiser for a candidate or political party that would require the Association to make a contribution to attend.

### **Specific examples of activities to *avoid* in connection with your role with the American Diabetes Association include:**

- Engaging in partisan political conversations at town halls, meetings, or other events where you are representing the Association.
- Making statements that favor, support, or oppose candidates or political parties at any Association event, meeting, publication, or on the website.
- Inviting elected officials to participate in Association events if they are running for election.
- Wearing political buttons or t-shirts while representing the Association at any event or meeting, in Association offices, or while visiting candidate offices.
- Posting comments that support, favor, or oppose candidates or political parties on any Association social media, including our blogs, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts (including staff and volunteer accounts that are associated with the Association, such as John/Jane Doe, ADA Advocacy Chair Twitter).

#### **National Office**

1701 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
Tel: 703-549-1500

#### **Diabetes Information**

call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)  
online [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

#### **The Mission** of the American

Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

- Forwarding an email from a candidate, political party, political action committee (PAC), or any partisan political group that came to your staff or volunteer Association email account. Do not use your Association email address to subscribe to or to receive candidate or political material. If you inadvertently get candidate or political staff or volunteer emails, delete them and unsubscribe your Association provided/associated email address from the email list.
- Paying for or attending political events in your capacity as a representative of ADA.
- Viewing candidate, party or other political websites online on an Association computer.
- Making statements or handing out literature supportive or critical of a candidate, political party or PAC at an Association event.
- Using the Association 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 Association phones. If you receive such calls, advise the caller to call you at home or on your cell phone in the evening or on the weekend.
- Putting partisan political signs, bumper stickers or political buttons up in Association office areas or windows.
- Allowing a candidate, political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way to use Association conference rooms or building space.
- Giving a candidate, political party, PAC or any group working in a partisan political way any Association mailing list.

Note: These organizational prohibitions do not inhibit your **individual participation** in election activities, provided you do not use any Association resources, act, or represent that you are acting as an employee, volunteer, officer, or Board member of the Association. Examples of the type of individual election activities you may participate in include voting, making financial contributions to candidates, volunteering for a candidate on your own time (for staff: outside of work hours or while on leave), stating who you support, or running for office as long as these activities are in no way associated with your role at the Association.

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