



## **GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

*Proposed guidelines for political engagement by Institute board, staff, fellows and associates*

### **INTRODUCTION**

**LÉO Africa Institute** (the “**Organization**”) encourages all of its board, staff, Fellows, and volunteers to be active and informed citizens and supports the individual capacity of the Organization’s board, staff, Fellows and volunteers to execute their prerogatives as citizens. However, as a nonprofit organization whose activities are regulated in part by the NGO Act, 2016 the Organization is required to exercise political neutrality and cannot engage in fundraising or campaigning to support or oppose any political party or candidate for an appointive office or elective political office, nor may it propose or register a candidate for elective political office. Violation of these regulations could have serious ramifications for the Organization, including loss of its tax-exempt status.

Therefore, the Organization provides guidelines on the permitted use and restrictions of Organization facilities and resources for partisan, politically related activity by its board, staff, Fellows and volunteers. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive but are intended to illustrate the extent/nature of participation by concerned persons in politically related activity. Questions regarding these guidelines should be addressed to the Senior Director at [awel@leoafricainstitute.org](mailto:awel@leoafricainstitute.org).

The Organization reserves the right to amend or modify these guidelines at its discretion or as it deems necessary to comply with the regulations governing political activities of non-profit organizations.

## **BOARD AND STAFF**

Board members and staff may take part in partisan political activities freely on their own time, however, when endorsing or opposing a candidate for political office or taking a position on an issue for the purpose of assisting or opposing a candidate, neither board members nor employees may give the appearance that they are representing the Organization.

Organization employees may not – and should not be asked to – perform tasks related to partisan political activities during the course of their work.

For guidance on interacting with elected officials, please refer to the Lobbying Rules section below. For questions on running for office, see the Seeking Public Office section below.

## **USE OF ORGANIZATION FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

All use of Organization facilities and resources are subject to Organization policies regulating time, place, and manner of use. The following may generally not be used by any person for activities restricted by these guidelines, regardless of whether the activity is on or off Organization facilities:

- Organization funds and the Organization's sales tax exemption for purchase of goods and services;
- Use of the Organization's name and/or logo may not appear on stationery or any other material used or intended for political purposes other than the use of the Organization's name to specify the location of an activity or event, but not in such a way as to construe that the event is, in any way, officially endorsed or sponsored by the Organization;

- Use of Organization title or position – such information should only be used for identification and not an indication of Organization endorsement;
- Any Organization communication system, including, without limitation, the phone system, and the Organization’s computer and internet network;
- The Organization’s bulk mailing privilege and mailing lists—including email addresses; and Organization provided office supplies, computers, telephones, copiers or other equipment.

### **NONPARTISAN ACTIVITIES**

The Organization does not directly or indirectly offer institutional endorsement of political candidates, but certain nonpartisan political activities (such as mobilization for public causes/campaigns) may be held at the Organization’s facilities. The organization also encourages the peaceful participation in political activities aimed at positively influencing the policies of government.

### **APPEARANCES BY CANDIDATES**

Candidates for public office or their designees are welcome to appear at the Organization’s facilities for non-campaign related activities, such as an educational or informational talk to the Organization. Such appearances must satisfy the following criteria:

- The individual(s) is/are chosen to speak for reasons other than candidacy for public office.
- The individual speaks in a non-candidate capacity.
- The event or organization maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere.
- No specific organized campaigning activity occurs in connection with the event.
- The event involving a candidate should not be dictated by, or put under the control of, a candidate, his or her representatives, or any outside organization.

- Any additional criteria appropriate for the particular event as determined by the Organization.

## **FUNDRAISING AND GIFT RESTRICTIONS**

Funds or contributions for political candidates or campaigns may not be solicited in the name of the Organization, and Organization resources may not be used in soliciting such funds. Fundraising activities are prohibited on the Organization's facilities. If Organization board members or staff make political contributions they do so as individuals and not on behalf of the Organization.

Board members, staff, and any person acting on their behalf, may not solicit or accept funds or contributions for political candidates or campaigns (their own or someone else's) from donors identified through donor rolls or other Organization records or directories.

## **SEEKING PUBLIC OFFICE**

Board members and staff may decide to run for public office while associated with the Organization. The Organization shall abide by and be subject to all applicable statutes, regulations, policies and any other directions regarding conflict of interest. The above notwithstanding, a board member or staff seeking public office must ensure that other Board members and staff do not experience a compromised work environment or feel pressure to comply with the political goals of the candidate.

## **LOBBYING RULES**

Board members and staff may lobby government officials regarding particular issues of interest to them on their own time. If they wish to lobby government officials in their capacity as an Organization board member or staff person they must first obtain written permission from the Senior Director. If it is determined that the Organization should contact a government official on a particular policy matter, such efforts must be coordinated through the Senior Director. Due to

national lobbying laws, the Organization must report any lobbying activities; therefore, it must be informed of all such activities conducted by Organization board members and employees.

*Last updated 7 August, 2018.*

**LÉO Africa Institute**