



Church Political Activity Chart

Is That Legal?

Yes
Sermons on moral and social issues and civic involvement (p. 11)
Discuss biblical instruction pertaining to moral and cultural issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage, etc. (p. 11)
Educate on political process and political/social/legislative issues (p. 11)
Support or oppose judicial, department, or cabinet appointments (p. 11)
Support or oppose other political appointments of non-elected officials (p. 11)
Encourage members to voice their opinions in favor or in opposition to certain legislation* (p. 11)
Petition drives supporting or opposing legislation (p. 11)
Support or oppose legislation unrelated to the church organization* (p. 4-8)
Support or oppose legislation that directly relates to the organization** (p. 4-8)
Engage in voter registration activities that avoid promoting any one candidate or particular political party (p.10-11)
Invite a candidate to speak (opposing candidates must be offered an opportunity to speak and no fundraising or church endorsements may occur) (p. 10)
Invite a candidate to speak in his or her non-candidate capacity (no reference may be made to the election) (p. 10)
Distribution of candidate surveys and incumbent voting records (avoid editorial opinions and make sure they cover a wide range of issues) (p. 9)
Use of church facilities by political candidates (as long as all other candidates are allowed or invited) (p. 11-12)

No
Endorsing or opposing political candidates (p. 8)
Contribute to Political Action Committees (PACs) (p. 8)
Church bulletin editorial where the pastor or staff member endorses a candidate (p. 8)
Church Campaigning for candidates (p. 8)
Church Fundraising for candidates (p. 8)
Granting use of church name to support a political candidate (however, nothing prohibits pastors or members from endorsing a candidate in their private capacity) (p. 12)
Support or oppose judicial candidates on an election ballot (p. 8)
Contribute to political candidates (p. 8)
In-kind and independent expenditures for or against political candidates (p. 8)

*Churches and other 501(c)(3) organizations may support or oppose legislation so long as such activity comprises an insubstantial part of the overall operation.

**A church or any other 501(c)(3) organization may without limitation support or oppose legislation that directly affects the organizational structure and operation. For example, a church may without limitation support or oppose legislation attempting to repeal the tax exempt status of the church.

Adapted from resources provided by:

Jay Sekulow, American Center for Law and Justice; www.aclj.org.

Mathew D. Staver, Liberty Council; www.lc.org.

CRS Report for Congress, Tax-Exempt Organizations: Political Activity Restrictions and Disclosure Requirements

www.AdvanceUSA.org