



Welcome and thank you for your interest in electing GLBT Democrats and supporting our efforts to endorse. This policy is being provided to members for review and feedback. Please supply all feedback in writing to Marissa Salas, Campaign Committee Chair at the following email Campaign@FloridaGLBTDemocratics.org. We highly encourage your attendance to vote on this very important policy at this next meeting.

Summer Membership & Conference Meeting
July 18 - 20, 2014
Location: Holiday Inn Melbourne - Viera Conference Center
8298 North Wickham Boulevard, Melbourne, FL 32940

As always, there is no cost to attend the membership meeting.

Florida Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Democratic Caucus Endorsement Policy and Candidate Screening Process

Endorsement Policy

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Florida GLBT Democratic Caucus (“Caucus”), the members of the Caucus may consider the endorsement of candidates for public or party office, upon a recommendation made following a candidate screening process. In addition, members may also consider the endorsement of specific legislative proposals.

- A. This Endorsement Policy and Candidate Screening Process is supplemental to the applicable provisions of the Caucus Bylaws, and the Florida Democratic Party Bylaws. This document also serves as a guideline for the making of endorsements by any chapter certified under the Caucus by the Florida Democratic Party (“chapter”).
- B. “Endorsement” shall be defined as endorsing, certifying, screening, or recommending, in any manner, candidates in special, primary or general elections, or candidates for election or selection to Democratic Party bodies, or any other commission, board or organization.
- C. No endorsement shall be made prior to the close of the candidate-qualifying period.
- D. Pursuant to the Florida Democratic Party loyalty oath, the Caucus will not support the election of the opponent of any Democratic nominee, the Caucus will not oppose the election of any Democratic nominee, nor will the Caucus support any non-Democrat against a Democrat in any election other than in judicial races.
- E. An endorsement by the Caucus is an official statement of support by the Caucus for a particular candidate and it means the candidate’s record, performance in office, or promise of future relations have been duly reviewed and considered and are consistent with the purpose

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and mission of the Caucus. A candidate endorsed by the Caucus may publicize that he or she has the support and backing of the Caucus.

- F. Endorsement of a candidate by the Caucus or a chapter does not obligate the Caucus or any chapter to provide financial or any other support for that candidate. While the Caucus Bylaws allow the Caucus to provide direct financial support for a candidate, that decision is made through a separate political action committee (PAC). In addition to any decision about direct financial support, an endorsed candidate may also be eligible for other support from the Caucus and/or its chapters, including but not limited to phone banks, robo calls, volunteer support and email solicitations.
- G. The Legislative Action Committee may recommend the endorsement of a specific legislative proposal, including a Constitutional amendment. Such recommendation shall be made in writing to the Caucus Board for its review and comment at least 14 days before the meeting of the membership where the proposal is to be considered. Any recommendation for endorsement of a legislative proposal distributed to the membership no later than 10 days before the meeting where it is to be considered and shall include, if appropriate, a summary of comments received from Board members.

Application for Endorsement

- A. By participating in the screening process conducted by the Caucus or a Caucus chapter a candidate must affirm that he or she is seeking the endorsement of the respective organization.
- B. In statewide and federal races, the state Caucus responsible for considering any application of a candidate for endorsement. Caucus chapters will follow the lead of the state Caucus on these decisions (or non-decisions) and may not make an endorsement or non-endorsement contrary to the position taken by the state Caucus.
- C. In non-statewide or federal races where the office sought is within the geographic area of a Caucus chapter, the chapter may, after an approved screening process, decide to endorse a candidate. In these cases, the Caucus will defer to the local chapter's research, efforts, and relationships with the candidates and will not take any position contrary to the position taken by the chapter.
- D. If the office sought overlaps the geographic area of more than one chapter:
 - 1. The respective chapters may decide to jointly screen and decide whether to endorse a candidate;
 - 2. The respective chapters may agree to defer the candidate's screening and consideration for endorsement to one chapter; or
 - 3. The respective chapters may defer the screening and consideration for endorsement to the Caucus, and/or the respective Regional Directors may request that the state Caucus screen and consider the candidate(s) for endorsement.

- E. If no chapter covers the geographic area of the office being sought, then it is the prerogative of the Caucus as to whether to make an endorsement.

Screening Process

- A. The decision to endorse a candidate is one of the most important decisions made by the Caucus or a chapter. As opposed to other entities within the Florida Democratic Party, Caucuses are allowed to endorse candidates because the party understands that this process allows this constituency to evaluate and support candidates who support the issues important to us.

- B. Caucus action with regard to endorsing a candidate sends a clear message as to whether the LGBT community and our allies can reliably view that candidate as a person who at least generally supports the issues important to the LGBT community and whether they should give their support and vote to that candidate. This responsibility is not taken lightly.

- C. A vote to endorse is potentially very divisive for the organization and its membership. The decision needs to be well considered, including having an appropriate screening and interview process. Endorsements require more than a 2/3 vote to ensure there is strong (overwhelming) support for backing a candidate -- especially in the case of a contested primary election when more than one Democrat is running for the same office.

- D. The Campaign Committee of the Caucus shall develop and maintain a candidate survey to ascertain a candidate's positions on issues of interest to the LGBT community. This questionnaire will serve as a guideline for the candidate surveys used by the Caucus chapters. The Campaign Committee will review and update the survey on at least an annual basis, and will periodically present the survey to the Caucus Board for review and comment.

- E. As part of the screening process, the Caucus (or chapter) will consider the viability of the candidate. Part of that consideration will include:
 - 1. Assessing whether the candidate has the ability to raise enough money to be competitive in the primary and/or general election;
 - 2. Assessing the candidate's commitment to running (e.g., time involved);
 - 3. Conducting at least a precursory background check of the candidate; and
 - 4. Looking at the level of campaign experience of the candidate and/or his/her campaign team.

- F. The Campaign Committee will determine the timeline for conducting the screening process. This process will include:
 - 1. The timeframe in which the questionnaire will be sent to candidates and the deadline for responding;

2. The schedule for interviewing candidates;
3. The date by which the committee will determine its endorsement recommendations; and
4. The schedule for presenting the recommendations to the Board and the membership.

G. To be eligible for endorsement a candidate must:

1. Affirm that he or she is seeking the endorsement of the Caucus;
2. Submit a completed survey to the Campaign Committee in a timely manner; and
3. Meet with Campaign Committee members for an interview as part of the screening process.

A candidate who previously met these requirements for endorsement consideration in a prior election period and/or for another office, is required to meet these requirements for the current election cycle.

- H. After reviewing a candidate's survey and conducting an interview with the candidate, the Campaign Committee may vote on recommending that the Caucus endorse that candidate. A vote by the Campaign Committee to recommend endorsing a candidate requires greater than 2/3 vote of the committee members present and voting. A Campaign Committee member should excuse himself/herself from participating in the screening and endorsement process where there is a potential conflict of interest with an elective or appointed political office that member may hold.
- I. Any candidate who has sought, but not received, endorsement by the Caucus will be so advised by a representative of the Campaign Committee.

ENDORSEMENT OF A CANDIDATE

Upon a vote by the membership to endorse a candidate:

- A. The Caucus may publicize the endorsement through a press release, emails, website, and any other method deemed appropriate by the Caucus. The candidate may be asked to provide a statement, photograph and/or logo for use by the Caucus in conjunction with the endorsement and election period.
- B. The endorsed candidate may announce or otherwise publicize the endorsement in any manner he/she determines appropriate to help with his/her campaign during election period. Upon request, the Caucus logo will be provided to the candidate for this election, for use in campaign materials, including the campaign website.