



The “do’s” and “don’ts” of corporate participation in ballot issue campaigns

October 13, 2015

While corporations are not permitted to provide direct partisan political support, they may use their resources to support or oppose statewide ballot issues. Such support can be direct, like a monetary contribution, or indirect, such as using corporate time or resources to create, print and mail ballot issue literature. When participating in these activities, corporations should be careful to follow these general guidelines:

Do:

- Keep careful account of any monetary expenditure, direct or indirect, that your corporation makes in support of a ballot issue.
- File the required Form 30-B-1 or 30-B-2 disclosure reports with the Ohio Secretary of State in a timely manner.
- Put the appropriate disclaimers on any materials the corporation distributes.
- Make certain that any materials or information the corporation distributes are accurate, factual and supportable.
- Be mindful of any internal non-solicitation policies, internet or email policies, or other corporate policies.
- Allow your employees to make voluntary contributions or voluntarily participate in election activities.
- Allow your employees to take paid or unpaid leave from work to participate in voluntary election activities, but only in accordance with existing leave policies.

Don't:

- Include any reference to a candidate, political party or any other partisan matter in materials distributed by the company.
- Allow employees to use corporate resources to support any partisan candidate or political party.
- Coerce or threaten employees to contribute to or support an issue.
- Provide any reward or enticement to encourage employees to support an issue campaign or vote in a particular manner.

- Provide mailing lists and contact information for your employees to a ballot issue committee without first considering your corporate policies, your employees' expectation of privacy and the precedent set.
 - Print any statement on pay envelopes intended to influence the political activity of employees.
 - Interfere with an employee's ability to vote on Election Day.
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