



## TARRANT COUNTY VETERANS COUNCIL

P.O. Box 16301, Fort Worth, TX 76162-0301

### Non-Profit Political Prohibition

As the political campaign season's upon us, it's important for all of us to remember we can't mix Tarrant County Veterans Council activities with politics – regardless of the issue or party affiliation. This is critically important to remember since 501(c)(3) organizations such as ours are not allowed to participate in campaigning for a specific candidate or political party while representing this organization. Nonprofit organizations are also not allowed to lobby for changes in local, state, or federal laws. If our organization does take part in such activities, the officers and committee chairpersons can be held liable and subsequently penalized. Even worse, the organization may lose its tax-exempt status and suffer the imposition of certain excise taxes.

Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity.

Certain activities or expenditures may not be prohibited depending on the facts and circumstances. For example, certain voter education activities (including presenting public forums and publishing voter education guides) conducted in a non-partisan manner do not constitute prohibited political campaign activity. In addition, other activities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, would not be prohibited political campaign activity if conducted in a non-partisan manner.

On the other hand, voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that would favor one candidate over another; oppose a candidate in some manner; or have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

You're encouraged to voice your opinions on all political topics, but you must do so without affiliation with the Tarrant County Veterans Council. We must ensure the Council is never listed as a sponsor or supporter of any type of political event. This includes postings on social media that may include use of the Council's logo. If you're aware of a Council member or supporter giving the impression the organization somehow endorses a political cause or individual, please let a Council officer know immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.