

POLICY AND PROCEDURES OF CAPITAL EQUALITY DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS, INC.

**Policy: #18-1 Adopted: September 9, 2018
Endorsements**

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This document establishes the policy and procedures for receiving, evaluating, and making endorsements of candidates in political races where the office sought is entirely within the geographic area of Capital Equality, or when approved by the State Caucus and other affected chapters for any area outside the geographic area of Capital Equality.

Endorsement of candidates is potentially very divisive. The decision needs to be well considered, and must include an appropriate and well-designed screening process that treats all potential endorsees fairly. An endorsement is an official statement of support from Capital Equality for a particular candidate. It indicates that the candidate's record, performance in office, or promise of future relations, is up to Capital Equality's high standards. An endorsement means the candidate can tell voters that they have the support and backing of Capital Equality and its members. An endorsement also makes a candidate eligible for campaign resources, including but not limited to, financial contributions, phone banks, and campaign volunteers.

AUTHORITY

Article II, Section 3, Endorsements, of Capital Equality's bylaws provide authority for the organization to consider in endorsements in political races. Pursuant to the bylaws, Capital Equality:

- shall not explicitly endorse any candidate prior to the primary and general election when more than one Democratic candidate is running for any one particular elected office; and,
- shall not, at any time, support any non-Democrat against a Democrat in any election, other than in judicial elections; and,
- shall make no endorsements that exceed the endorsement authority granted to Capital Equality by the State Caucus; and,
- shall make no candidate endorsement prior to the close of the candidate-qualifying period; and,
- shall not endorse in opposition to another chapter or in opposition to the State Caucus.

Article VII, Section 2, Duties and Powers of the Board, of Capital Equality's bylaws provide "full power and authority" over the affairs of the organization to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors hereby adopts this policy and procedures statement in order to fulfill the goals of the organization.

Article X, Section 1, Paragraph C, Campaign and Communications Committee, of Capital Equality's bylaws designate the Campaign and Communications Committee and its Chair with

the responsibility of conducting the candidate screening process and implementing the endorsement policy as approved by the Board.

This endorsement policy and screening process is supplemental to the applicable provisions of Capital Equality's bylaws, State Caucus bylaws, and the Florida Democratic Party bylaws.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. The endorsement process will generally be initiated by the candidate seeking endorsement, or by a member of their campaign staff responsible for such requests.
2. When a member of the Caucus or an interested person believes that the Caucus should endorse a particular candidate, they must provide contact information for the candidate or the candidate's responsible staff member so the Caucus may confirm that the candidate is seeking such an endorsement. In all cases no endorsement may be considered by the Caucus or by a chapter without a confirmation that the candidate is seeking such an endorsement. However, a constructive non-endorsement may be considered with or without a request from the candidate.
3. The Campaign and Communications Committee shall utilize a screening process that mirrors the screening process outlined in Section 3, Screening Process, of the State Caucus Endorsement Policy and Candidate Screening Process, attached hereto. This includes development of candidate questionnaires to ascertain a candidate's positions on issues of interest to Capital Equality's membership.
4. Notice of a membership meeting for endorsements shall be made in accordance with the requirements established in Capital Equality's bylaws.
5. Any recommendation for endorsement shall be distributed to the membership no later than 3 days before the meeting where it is to be considered and shall include, if appropriate, a summary of comments received from Board members. Additionally, the results of all candidate questionnaires will be made publicly available, regardless of the Caucus's decision to endorse or not endorse in any particular race.
6. The membership meeting to consider endorsements will be called to order by the Capital Equality President or their designee. The endorsement portion of the meeting will generally be conducted by the Campaign and Communications Chair or the president's designee. To be approved, a motion to endorse will require 2/3 or greater vote of those present and voting. Endorsements may be considered en masse or separately as determined appropriate by the meeting chair.
7. Upon an affirmative vote by the membership to endorse a candidate:
 - a. Within 5 days, the Campaign and Communications Committee will provide a letter or email to the candidate advising the candidate of Capital Equality's endorsement. Such missive will include the full name of the Caucus along with

the Caucus logo and such other information deemed appropriate by the Campaign and Communications Committee or the membership including a limitation of the endorsement to the current election cycle.

- b. Additionally, within 5 days, the Campaign and Communications Committee will provide notice of the endorsement to the State Caucus pursuant to the procedures outlined in the State Caucus Chapter Endorsements Procedures, attached hereto.
 - c. The Caucus may publicize the endorsement through a press release, e-mails, 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 provided all endorsed candidates are provided the same opportunity to participate.
 - d. The endorsed candidate may announce or otherwise publicize the endorsement and use the Caucus logo in any manner the candidate determines appropriate to help with the candidate's campaign during the current election cycle.
 - e. The Caucus reserves the right to withdraw their endorsement when necessary and when approved by the membership.
8. Any candidate who has sought, but not received, endorsement by the Caucus will be so advised by the Campaign and Communications Committee or committee's designee as soon as possible.

DEFINITIONS

- Capital Equality/Caucus: Capital Equality Democratic Caucus, Inc.
- Endorsement: Certifying 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.
- State Caucus: Florida LGBTQA Democratic Caucus

REFERENCES

- State Caucus Endorsement Policy and Candidate Screening Process
- State Caucus Chapter Endorsement Procedures

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

Overview: As part of the Florida Democratic Party, caucuses are allowed to endorse candidates because the party understands that this process allows the constituency represented by the caucus to evaluate and support candidates who support the issues important to them. When the LGBTCA Caucus (“the Caucus”) or one of its certified chapters (“chapter”) endorses a candidate it sends a clear message that the LGBT community and our allies can reliably view that candidate as a person who supports the issues important to the LGBT community and that they should give their support and vote to the endorsed candidate. The decision to endorse a candidate is one of the most important decisions made by the Caucus or a chapter. This responsibility is not taken lightly.

1. Endorsement Policy

Endorsements of candidates is potentially very divisive. The decision needs to be well considered, and must include an appropriate and well-designed screening process that treats all potential endorsees fairly. In accordance with their bylaws, the Caucus membership may consider the endorsement of candidates for public or party office, upon a recommendation made following a candidate screening process. In addition, the Caucus membership 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.
- B. The Caucus Campaign Planning Director (“CPD”) with the assistance of the Campaign Planning Committee is responsible for conducting the candidate screening process and implementing the endorsement policy approved by the Caucus Board.
- C. “Endorsement” shall be defined as endorsing, certifying, 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.
- D. The Legislative Action Committee may recommend the endorsement of, or opposition to, a specific legislative proposal, including a constitutional amendment.
- E. No candidate endorsement shall be made prior to the close of the candidate-qualifying period.
- F. 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 partisan or non-partisan election other than judicial races.
- G. 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 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.
- H. Endorsement of a candidate by the Caucus or a chapter does not obligate the Caucus or any chapter to provide financial or 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 committee (PC). In addition to possible direct financial support by the PC, 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.
- I. The Caucus is responsible for considering endorsements sought by candidates in national and statewide races and for those races where the office sought crosses county lines. Chapters will follow the lead of the Caucus on these decisions (or constructive non-decisions) and may not make an endorsement or non-endorsement prior to or contrary to the position taken by the Caucus.

- J. In races where the office sought is entirely within the geographic area of a chapter, the chapter may endorse a candidate using an endorsement process as outlined below. In these cases, the Caucus will defer to the local chapter's research, efforts, and relationships with the candidates and will not take a position contrary to the position taken by the chapter.
- K. For any state, federal or local race where the office sought represents any area outside the geographical area represented by a single chapter, i.e. the office sought crosses county lines or if the office sought overlaps the geographic area of more than one chapter, it is the prerogative of the Caucus to consider the endorsement in such a race. However the Caucus will seek input from affected chapters and rely heavily on their local knowledge of candidates and issues when making such an endorsement. In general, the Caucus will defer to the affected chapter or chapters in races that are not national or statewide, except where there is disagreement amongst the affected chapters or for other good cause.
- L. In no circumstances may a chapter endorse in opposition to another chapter or in opposition to the Caucus. If a chapter violates this section or fails to follow the required endorsement process the Caucus reserves the right to refute the endorsement or consider further consequences.

2. General Procedures

- A. The endorsement process will generally be initiated by the candidate seeking endorsement, or by a member of their campaign staff responsible for such requests.
- B. When a member of the Caucus or an interested person believes that the Caucus should endorse a particular candidate, they must provide contact information for the candidate or the candidate's responsible staff member so the Caucus may confirm that the candidate is seeking such an endorsement. In all cases no endorsement may be considered by the Caucus or by a chapter without a confirmation that the candidate is seeking such an endorsement. However a constructive non-endorsement may be considered with or without a request from the candidate.
- C. Other than national or statewide races; where the office sought represents an area outside the geographical area represented by a single chapter the following general guidelines will be used to ensure that chapters can participate in or lead the endorsement process:
 - 1. When the office sought covers a geographical area where the Caucus has no chapters, the Caucus shall consider any endorsements.
 - 2. If only one caucus chapter is affected, that chapter may consider an endorsement or defer to the Caucus for endorsement.
 - 3. When more than one chapter is affected because the office sought represents an area that includes two or more counties represented by different chapters:
 - a. The respective chapters may agree to jointly screen and endorse a candidate using one of the affected chapters' approved endorsement policy, (preferred method);
 - b. The respective chapters may agree to defer the candidate's screening and consideration for endorsement to one chapter;
 - c. In the event the respective chapters cannot agree on an endorsement process but would like to endorse jointly, the Caucus may conduct the candidate screening and allow the members of the affected chapters to vote on the endorsement using the Caucus' policies and procedures;
 - d. The respective chapters may defer the screening and consideration for endorsement to the Caucus;
 - e. Or the respective Regional Directors may request that the Caucus screen and consider the candidate(s) for endorsement.

4. When a chapter has an interest in endorsing in any race where the office sought crosses county lines, the chapter is responsible for contacting the Caucus and other affected chapters and will consult with them to come up with an agreed upon endorsement process. The interested chapter may not endorse in said race except as outlined in #3 above.
5. If the candidate in such a race first contacts the Caucus, the CPD will ensure that the affected chapters are provided the opportunities to participate as outlined in #3 above and the Caucus will not endorse in such a race unless the affected chapter(s) fail(s) to respond.

3. Screening Process

- A. The Caucus Campaign Committee (CCC) shall develop and maintain Caucus candidate questionnaires to ascertain a candidate's positions on issues of interest to the LGBT community. This questionnaire may serve as a guideline for the candidate surveys used by the Caucus chapters. The CCC will review and update the questionnaires on at least an annual basis, and will periodically present them to the Caucus Board for review and comment.
- B. The CCC will notify the Caucus Communications Director (CCD) of the availability of endorsements and the respective timeframes and provide copies of the questionnaires to be posted on the Caucus website. The CCD will publish this information along with a link to the appropriate endorsement applications via Caucus email, Facebook page, website and other appropriate mediums and venues. Such information will be resent/republished and reposted on at least a monthly basis during election cycles.
- C. Chapters will notify the DEC's in their respective county of the availability of Caucus and chapter endorsements. Where possible, Regional Directors will notify additional DEC's in their respective regions. Caucus members will be informed by email of the availability of endorsements and asked to notify any candidates who may be interested. Chapters will be encouraged to disseminate this information to their members and publish it to the extent possible on at least a monthly basis.
- D. The respective chapter or the CCC 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 when appropriate;
 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.
- E. As part of the screening process, the CCC (or chapter) will consider the viability of the candidate. Part of that consideration may 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. To be eligible for endorsement a candidate must:
 1. Affirm in writing that he or she is seeking the endorsement of the Caucus and/or chapter;
 2. Submit a completed questionnaire to the CCC in a timely manner; and

3. When appropriate meet with CCC members for an interview as part of the screening process.
 4. A candidate who previously met these requirements for endorsement consideration in a prior election period and/or for another office, must meet these requirements for the current election cycle unless specifically waived by a vote of the CCC.
- G. After reviewing a candidate's survey and conducting an interview with the candidate, the CCC may vote to recommend that the Caucus membership endorse that candidate. A vote by the CCC to recommend endorsing a candidate requires a 2/3 or greater affirmative vote of the committee members present and voting. To qualify to vote on the endorsement the committee member must have attended two of the last three committee meetings. A CCC member should excuse himself/herself from participating in the screening and endorsement process where there is a potential conflict of interest of any kind.

4. ENDORSEMENT OF A CANDIDATE

- A. Notice of a membership meeting for endorsements must be sent to the membership 30 days in advance.
- B. Endorsement recommendations for candidates or legislative proposals shall be made in writing to the Caucus Board for its review and comment at least 5 days before the Board meeting.
- C. Any recommendation for endorsement shall be 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.
- D. The membership meeting to consider endorsements will be called to order by the Caucus President or their designee. The endorsement portion of the meeting will generally be conducted by the Campaign Planning Director or their designee. To be approved, a motion to endorse will require 2/3 or greater vote of those present and voting. Endorsements may be considered en masse or separately as determined appropriate by the meeting chair.
- E. Upon an affirmative vote by the membership to endorse a candidate:
 1. Within 5 days, the CPD will provide a letter or email to the candidate advising them of the Caucus' endorsement. Such missive will include the full name of the Caucus along with the Caucus logo and such other information deemed appropriate by the CPD or the membership including a limitation of the endorsement to the current election cycle.
 2. The Caucus may publicize the endorsement through a press release, e-mails, 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 provided all endorsed candidates are provided the same opportunity to participate.
 3. The endorsed candidate may announce or otherwise publicize the endorsement and use the Caucus logo in any manner he/she determines appropriate to help with his/her campaign during the current election cycle
 4. The Caucus reserves the right to withdraw their endorsement when necessary and when approved by the membership.
- F. Any candidate who has sought, but not received, endorsement by the Caucus will be so advised by the CPD or their designee as soon as possible.

Florida LGBTQA Democratic Caucus Chapter Endorsement Procedures

As part of the Florida Democratic Party, caucuses are allowed to endorse candidates because the party understands that this process allows the constituency represented by the caucus to evaluate and support candidates who support the issues important to them. When the LGBTQA Caucus (“the Caucus”) or one of its certified chapters (“chapter”) endorses a candidate it sends a clear message that the LGBT community and our allies can reliably view that candidate as a person who supports the issues important to the LGBT community and that they should give their support and vote to the endorsed candidate. The decision to endorse a candidate is one of the most important decisions made by the Caucus or a chapter. This responsibility is not taken lightly.

Certified chapters of the Caucus are allowed to make endorsements only when authorized to do so by the Caucus and by the chapter bylaws as submitted during the certification process. Endorsements of candidates is potentially very divisive. The decision needs to be well considered, and must include an appropriate and well-designed screening process that treats all potential endorsees fairly. The chapter must have a written policy and procedure. The policy should be approved, documented and publicized well before the endorsement process begins and should include a request to be endorsed from the candidate or an authorized campaign staff person. Endorsements should require a supermajority (2/3 or more) vote to ensure there is strong 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.

The Caucus is responsible for considering endorsements sought by candidates in statewide races and for those races where the office sought crosses county lines. Chapters will follow the lead of the Caucus on these decisions (or constructive non-decisions) and may not make an endorsement or non-endorsement prior to or contrary to the position taken by the Caucus. When a chapter has an interest in providing an endorsement in any race where the office sought represents any area outside the geographical area represented by a chapter, i.e. the office sought crosses county lines, the chapter will consult with the Caucus and other affected chapters to come up with an agreed upon endorsement. In races where the office sought is entirely within the geographic area of a chapter, the chapter may endorse a candidate using an endorsement process as outlined above. In these cases, the Caucus will defer to the local chapter’s research, efforts, and relationships with the candidates and will not take a position contrary to the position taken by the chapter.

Chapters who make endorsements will communicate their decisions to the Caucus as soon as practical, but in no case later than the chapter’s notification to the endorsed candidate. Upon notification by the chapter and when requested by the endorsed candidate, the Caucus will also provide its endorsement to a candidate who has been properly endorsed by a chapter. Such notification from the chapter should provide the following minimum information sent by email or by web submission to the Caucus President, Campaign Planning Committee Director (CPC) and Communications Director:

1. Name of the endorsing chapter
2. Date of the endorsement
3. Name of the endorsee
4. Office
5. Candidates contact information including:
 - a. email,
 - b. phone number,
 - c. campaign contact where different from the endorsed candidate
 - d. and campaign or candidate website
6. Information as to whether the candidate is seeking the Caucus endorsement
7. Signed confirmation that the chapter endorsement process was followed
8. Name and title of the person submitting the information along with their contact information

Upon receipt of the information from the chapter, the Caucus Campaign Planning Director (CPD) or their designee will confirm with the candidate whether they are seeking the Caucus’ endorsement. Once the request for endorsement has been confirmed the CPD will notify the Caucus Communications Director who will ensure that the endorsement is publicized and disseminated in the same manner as with a regular Caucus endorsement.

The CPD will also send an acknowledgement to the candidate with the information and the Caucus logo necessary for the candidate to publicize the Caucus endorsement. The acknowledgement will be copied to the chapter person who submitted the endorsement information.