

## WORKING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Often PTAs work with other organizations with which we have a common interest—the education, health and welfare, or safety of children and youth. Please remember when joining a coalition, partnership or committee, that since we have been granted favorable tax status by the Internal Revenue Service, we must adhere to the rules and regulations established for those tax-exempt organizations referred to as 501(c)(3).

Our favorable status requires us to be noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan. In addition to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, one of the Charter Rules of the Illinois PTA is to refrain from all partisan and factional political activities. This allows the association to take a stand on *issues* and *principles* that involve the welfare of children, but prohibits taking a stand on candidates or political parties.

It is extremely important that you understand the difference between being politically active and being partisan, and understand that these restrictions are the result of governmental regulations that can carry serious consequences for our association.

Below you will find a brief list of that highlights what you can and cannot do when joining with other organizations on an *issue* campaign.

### What you CAN do

- Encourage your members to be aware of legislative issues that will affect the welfare of children and youth;
- Encourage your members to exercise their right to vote;
- Provide information on voter registration, polling places, pending legislation, complete voting records of candidates (not selective votes);
- Encourage members to attend candidate discussions, town hall meetings, public forums, and discussion groups;
- Provide PTA positions statements on issues that impact the future of children and youth;
- Host a candidates forum where all candidates are invited to speak to your audience.

### What you CANNOT do

- Participate in any coalition or committee that seeks to slate and/or endorse candidates or parties for office;
- Endorse any candidate or slate of candidates even when positions seem to be in alignment with stated PTA positions;
- Invite any *one particular* candidate to speak to your audience during an election campaign;
- Contribute PTA funds to an individual's campaign or a political party.

These simple reminders apply to any type of election, from the national level to the local school board level, as well as your working relationship with other organizations with similar goals. Individual PTA members attending a meeting where the Illinois PTA is represented are cautioned about taking any action that would be contrary to the stated positions of the association.

For additional information, please refer to the Illinois PTA website: [www.illinoispta.org](http://www.illinoispta.org).