



Campaign Finance Act “Do’s” and “Don’ts” Offered to Schools and School Employees

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School board members and school employees are required to abide by Michigan’s Campaign Finance Act while campaigning in support of or opposition to a ballot proposal. The following points may be used by school districts as a guide in determining the legal parameters of involvement for board members and school employees in ballot proposal campaigns:

- All information disseminated by a school district relating to a ballot proposal must be factual without expressly advocating for or against the proposal if district funds are used.
- Board members and school employees may engage in campaign activities which support or oppose a ballot proposal on their own time as long as district funds are not used.
- A district may not give or loan paper, pencils, duplicating equipment, printing supplies and sundry items to a campaign committee supporting or opposing a ballot proposal.
- Leasing school facilities, including office space or phones, to a community group supporting or opposing a ballot proposal for the purpose of contacting voters is prohibited.
- The teachers’ lounge, school bulleting boards, and other areas within a district building may not be used to disseminate literature supporting or opposing a ballot proposal even if it was printed by an outside organization.
- A school district may not use public resources to create and maintain Internet links to websites, organizations, commentary or editorials that expressly support or oppose a ballot proposal if the district does so for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the proposal.

- School buildings may be used for presentations supporting or opposing a ballot proposal after school hours pursuant to board policy. Care should be taken to ensure that facilities are equally available to both proponents and opponents of the proposal and appropriate fees, if required by board policy, are administered consistently.
- Board members and school employees may use their own materials to draft letters to the editor to express their opinions on a ballot proposal.
- The occasional, incidental use of public resources by a superintendent to communicate his or her views on a ballot proposal to constituents or the media is permissible.
- A school official is prohibited from sending a mass email or mailing that expressly advocates for or against a ballot proposal.
- A school district may produce or disseminate debates, interviews, or commentary regarding a ballot proposal if it is done in the regular course of broadcasting or publication (e.g., the normal, routine publication schedule of the broadcast or publication).
- A school board may discuss its support of or opposition to a ballot proposal at an open meeting as well as adopt a resolution supporting or opposing the proposal and record the resolution in the meeting minutes. However, the use of public resources to distribute or publicize the resolution beyond the regular provision of factual information regarding actions taken by the board is prohibited.
- Board members may wear T-shirts or buttons that support or oppose a ballot proposal at board meetings if not prohibited by board policy. School employees may also wear these items at school if not prohibited by board policy or the district's collective bargaining agreement.
- Unions and associations may communicate with their members about a ballot proposal by using school mailboxes provided that such communications are sent only to the collective bargaining representatives' members.