

# CDP Neutrality Policy FAQ

## ***Why is neutrality in primaries important?***

Being a Party Officer provides an individual with an incredible opportunity to grow the Party's organization in support of our nominees in the General Election. By choosing this path of service, you are building the infrastructure that all Democrats will stand on to have the best path of victory in the fall regardless of who emerges victorious from a primary.

While we all come to this work from different backgrounds and perspectives that may make certain candidates more attractive to us than others, we enforce the neutrality policy to ensure that every Democrat is set up for success in the fall.

## **Definitions**

**Jurisdiction:** A district in which a Democratic official has a direct leadership, operational, or oversight role. For example, the jurisdiction of a House District vice chair is their House District, but not their county or any overlapping SDs.

- **Geographic restrictions:** For the purposes of the Neutrality Policy, we use the "populated precinct" rule. Neutrality is expected in all races that will appear on the ballot in at least one populated precinct within the official's jurisdiction. For example, if HD74 and SD81 overlap, the officers of each district must remain neutral in both districts. Statewide races, including president and senator, appear on all ballots in the state and all officers at all levels are expected to remain neutral during primaries.

**Officer:** Strictly speaking, a district officer is the chair, vice chair, or secretary of the district, as those are the three required roles. In practice, officers include every elected position in a district beyond automatic members. For example, a county might have several vice chairs, a treasurer, and other roles as defined by the county's bylaws. For the purposes of the neutrality policy, these are all considered officers.

**Neutrality:** Any action that appears to favor one candidate over another in a primary is considered a violation of neutrality. This includes endorsements, unequal offers of resources, donations, and other ways where a Democratic official may advantage one candidate.

**Involved in direct election:** For the purposes of neutrality, those party members who directly administer caucuses, assemblies, conventions, or vacancy committees must remain neutral. This does not include platform or rules committee members. This does, however, include credentials and perm org committees, as well as volunteers at a nominating meeting.

## Common Questions

### **Who does neutrality apply to?**

Any person who is elected to a leadership position in the Democratic Party represents the party in what they do or say, and is subject to the Neutrality Policy. At a caucus, assembly, or convention, this also includes volunteers who are helping as greeters, tally committee, credentials check in, and other party roles.

### **Can I endorse outside my jurisdiction?**

The guiding rule of the Neutrality Policy is that any officer may endorse in races OUTSIDE their jurisdictions. This guidance applies to any race that does not appear on a ballot in at least one precinct within their jurisdiction. State party officers and state initiative officers are prohibited from favoring a primary candidate in any race contested in the state.

### **What is the policy for overlapping districts? Can an SD chair endorse in an HD that shares precincts with the HD?**

An SD chair can endorse in another HD in their county or outside, provided that there is no overlap of populated precincts between the SD and HD. If part of the HD falls within the SD, then endorsements would violate this Policy.

### **What is the policy for adjacent districts? Can an HD chair endorse in another HD?**

Per the current Neutrality Policy, officials in one district may endorse in another noncontiguous district, provided they do so as a private citizen and do not use their title in any endorsement. However, officers are advised to use their best judgment as to the interests of the Party as a whole before offering out-of-district endorsements.

### **Why are state initiative officers included in neutrality if they have no role in the candidate selection process?**

Initiative officers are included so that no one is using Party resources or access to boost any one candidate over another. This includes financial support and also access to resources possibly unavailable to other candidates, such as VAN, event invites, or organizational access.

### **Can I keep employment with a campaign as well as being an initiative officer?**

The individual should step down as initiative officer while employed with a campaign to avoid any conflict of interest.

### **What can precinct organizers (POs) and captains do under the neutrality policy?**

POs are not covered under the policy as individuals and may endorse a specific candidate in a contested race. However, when taking part in party activities, they must remain neutral. (For example, if a PO is hosting an event in their jurisdiction using their title as the PO, all candidates must be invited regardless of endorsement).

### **What about after the primary?**

The CDP is a political party, and our goal is to elect Democrats. After a primary, all volunteers are expected to support the nominees of the Party, but are not at any time required to provide financial support to candidates.

### **What are the rules for non-partisan races without a primary?**

CDP 1.1.C: The use of the Democratic Party name shall not occur in endorsements of a candidate(s) in a partisan or nonpartisan election by any official party organization. . . including the endorsement of one Democratic candidate over another, or on ballot issues, except through the action of a Central Committee or in accordance with the official nomination and assembly procedures. [Have to be neutral if two registered bona fide Dems as of the filing date]

### **If a campaign pays for a district's email list, is that allowed if all candidates don't receive the same list?**

A campaign may pay for a district's email list; this is considered the same as purchasing VAN access. Candidates can choose whether to pay for VAN; if they don't, then they don't get access. Campaigns may not, however, pay a district directly for a list pulled from VAN. Data in VAN is considered the property of the Democratic Party.

### Neutrality Table

<b>Position</b>	<b>Where is neutrality required?</b>
<b>CDP Executive Officers</b> (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and other roles approved by the State Central Committee)	All races within the state. (This is not the same as all statewide races, which are state-level positions such as governor, senator, secretary of state.)
<b>County Officers</b> (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and other roles approved by the County Central Committee)	All races that would appear on the ballot in at least one precinct within the county
<b>CDP Initiative Officers</b> (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and other roles approved by the Initiative)	All races within the state

<b>JD, SD, HD, CD Officers</b> (Chair, Vice Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, and other roles approved by their central committees) <sup>1</sup>	All races that will appear on the ballot in at least one populated precinct within the district
<b>Executive and Central Committee Members</b>	Not bound by Neutrality Policy if not an officer*
<b>Employees of CDP or County Parties</b>	All races within their jurisdiction. (CDP = all races within the state; county = all races within the county)
<b>POs (Precinct Organizers)</b>	When doing work on behalf of the party (such as walking with party slate literature)*
<b>CDP Initiative Members</b>	Nowhere*
<b>Rank and File Members of the Democratic Party</b>	Nowhere

*\* POs, committee, and initiative members may endorse as they please. However, endorsements must not include their title ("Precinct organizer", "Initiative member", etc.)*

## Violations of Neutrality

*Neutrality is violated when an officer takes an action that appears to favor one Democratic candidate over another in a primary. Examples include:*

- Endorsing one candidate
- Donating to a campaign (unless you give the same amount to each candidate in a race)
- Failure to invite all candidates to party events (invitations to a single event as a group, or a series of single-candidate events are both allowed)
- Comments that disparage or promote one candidate over another
- Voting on endorsements as part of another organization or outside group
- Being a registered agent or spokesperson of an organization that promotes or disparages one candidate over another
- Offering different levels of support or different terms to different candidates in the same race
- Wearing candidate gear or distributing candidate literature at a nominating event

*Not Violations:*

- Initiative scorecarding on specific issues, if forms are provided to all candidates and information is made public to all voters without presentation bias
- Providing resources such as space for fundraisers equally for all candidates—even if one or more candidates decline the offer.

---

<sup>1</sup> If you're unsure about if this policy applies to your position, please direct questions to your County Chair

- Endorsing entirely outside the district for which a person is an official. State party officers and state initiative officers may not endorse in any race contested in the state, as they are considered to have all races within their jurisdictions.