

## NARFE, Politics and Partisanship: Clarifying the Terms, Facts, Laws and Policies

*This fact sheet describes how NARFE engages in efforts to influence public policy, how NARFE-PAC serves as a separate political arm, attempts to clarify terms such as political and nonpartisan, discusses what some laws permit or require us to do (notably, based on our tax status), and what NARFE's internal policies guide our efforts.*

### #1 NARFE Advocates for Public Policies Beneficial to Federal Employees and Retirees

NARFE's [mission statement](#) commits to, as its first plank, the following: "To support legislation and regulations beneficial to federal civilian employees and annuitants and potential annuitants under any federal civilian retirement system and to oppose those detrimental to their interests."

Biennially, NARFE members submit proposals for—and NARFE's member-elected, national executive board adopts—a set of [Advocacy Positions](#) that guide the policy that NARFE advocates for or against at the national level.

Guided by the Advocacy Positions and member views regarding the most important issues—reflected by surveys and represented by elected officers—NARFE's National President adopts NARFE's [Advocacy Priorities](#), which guide how to prioritize proactive efforts based on limited time and resources.

NARFE advances those advocacy positions and priorities by directly lobbying members of Congress, their staff, and administration officials, providing arguments in favor of beneficial policies and against detrimental policies; activating NARFE's member-driven grassroots advocacy to demonstrate the impact of policies on constituents and the perception of policies among future voters; and influencing public opinion by engaging traditional and social media.

### #2 NARFE Applauds and/or Criticizes the Actions of Elected Officials Related to NARFE Issues, But Refrains from Commentary on Non-NARFE Issues

NARFE's advocacy efforts play a critical role in facilitating recognition, reward and accountability for elected officials from their voters and constituents and communicating the impact of policies—good and bad—advanced by elected officials.

NARFE does so by focusing on policy actions related to NARFE issues, as guided by our Advocacy Positions. We do not focus on applauding or criticizing the elected official personally; and we do not focus or comment on policy actions by elected officials on non-NARFE issues.

We do not presume to speak for NARFE members on such issues; NARFE's voice would be diluted by doing so; it could create internal division within NARFE as it may not reflect a broad consensus; and it would be relatively ineffective as a purported voice for the views of the general public.

As such, for example, NARFE will take positions related to the earned federal retirement and health benefits of federal employees and retirees, the merit-based civil service, and on other issues identified and endorsed via our Advocacy Position process, but will not comment on the following: environmental or energy policy, abortion policy, immigration policy, tariff policy, transgender issues, etc. Individual NARFE members may hold strong views on some of these issues, and may even weigh them more heavily than NARFE issues, but NARFE does not presume to speak for NARFE members on these issues.

Additionally, here are some examples of how NARFE would or would not applaud or criticize elected officials for policy actions.

#### Statements We Might Make:

- Senator Clay's bill to eliminate cost of living adjustments to earned federal retirement benefits betrays promises made in exchange for service to this country.
- President Washington's termination of more than 10,000 public servants based on their party registration returns us to the spoils system, and its consequent corruption. It undermines the rule of law and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution over the person temporarily holding the office of the president.

#### Statements We Would Not Make:

- Senator Clay's proposed cuts to federal retirement benefits demonstrates his lack of character and unfitness to serve as a U.S. Senator.
- Based on his political-based firings, NARFE urges all NARFE members to vote against the re-election of President Washington—America's Present-Day Stalin.

### **#3 NARFE is Nonpartisan and Does Not Engage in Political (Campaign) Activity**

The term “nonpartisan” is defined by [Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary](#) as “free from party affiliation, bias, or designation.” NARFE does not affiliate with any political party. We focus on advocating for NARFE issues to members of both political parties, and always endeavor to approach both without bias as much as is humanly possible.

The term “political” can have a broad definition. According to [Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary](#), political may mean “of or relating to government, a government, or the conduct of government,” or “of, relating to, or concerned with the making as distinguished from the administration of governmental policy,” among other alternative definitions. Obviously, some of NARFE’s advocacy activity may meet this broader, colloquial definition of “political.”

But political activity often has a more precise definition in the legal context, and as compared to advocacy on behalf of specific public policy. Notably, under the Hatch Act, according to the [Department of Justice](#), “Political activity is defined as any activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.” Other federal laws, including federal election law and the Internal Revenue Code distinguish between advocacy to influence legislation or policy and attempts to influence the outcome of an election, using the term “political” related to election campaign activity rather than lobbying or advocacy activity.

NARFE—as distinguished from NARFE-PAC—does not endorse or financially support candidates for elected office. In this sense, we do not engage in political activity or electoral campaign activity.

However, NARFE does identify how elected officials have stood on key NARFE issues through publication of voting records, cosponsorships of key bills, candidate questionnaires, and other public statements. But we understand NARFE members will weigh those positions on NARFE issues with their own personal views when deciding how to vote.

NARFE adheres to a nonpartisan approach and refrains from political activity as a matter of longstanding organizational custom. As a 501(c)(5) tax-exempt organization we have legal latitude to endorse candidates or ally or oppose political parties or candidates. But we have not found the benefits of such an approach to outweigh the costs.

### **#4 Rather, NARFE-PAC, a Separate, Segregated Fund of NARFE, Supports Candidates (and Committees Supporting Candidates) for Congressional Office.**

NARFE’s political action committee, NARFE-PAC, is a separate, segregated fund of NARFE, financed by voluntary, specific member contributions. No NARFE member dues go to NARFE-PAC.

NARFE-PAC supports financially candidates for congressional office, and other committees that support candidates for congressional office. Candidates may indicate that NARFE-PAC supports them, but we require that they specify NARFE-PAC, as opposed to NARFE. Note that, historically, we have not been involved in presidential elections.

NARFE-PAC is used in conjunction with NARFE’s advocacy efforts, as it provides opportunities to build relationships and have face-to-face interactions with key decisionmakers. It also aids congressional candidates more likely to support key NARFE issues, making it more likely they win election.

You can learn more about NARFE-PAC here: <https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/narfe-pac/narfe-pac-member-homepage/>.

### **#5 NARFE-PAC Does Not Use Political Party as a Determining Factor in Whether to Support Any Candidate for Office**

NARFE-PAC determines whether and how much to give to a candidate for office based on whether and to what degree we believe doing so will advance our advocacy efforts. There are a variety of factors that help us determine this, from voting record to leadership positions to competitiveness of elections. Prior to giving, we consult with local federation leaders for their views on the candidate, and to share information regarding NARFE leader/member interactions.

To learn more about NARFE’s Consultative Process and how NARFE-PAC disbursements are determined, see here: <https://www.narfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/The-NARFE-PAC-Consultative-Process.pdf>.

To view NARFE-PAC disbursements, see here (scroll down to Disbursement Reports): <https://www.narfe.org/advocacy/narfe-pac/narfe-pac-member-homepage/narfe-pac-contribution-and-disbursement-reports/>.