

What Churches Can and Cannot Do ...

SUMMARY

Churches CAN

- ❖ Conduct voter-registration drives.
- ❖ Distribute voter education material, including issue-oriented voter guides with the voting records of candidates.
- ❖ Hold candidate forums where all candidates are invited to speak.
- ❖ Allow candidates and elected officials to speak in the church, but if the speaker speaks about the race, “equal time, equal opportunity” laws prevail.
- ❖ Freely discuss issues and pending legislation.
- ❖ Lobby for or against legislation and spend an “insubstantial” amount of the churches budget (approximately five percent) on “direct” lobbying efforts.
- ❖ Have individuals within the church, including the pastor, endorse candidates as private citizens –not on behalf of the church.
- ❖ Work with political organizations or committees that are not part of the church (such as California Family Council and Pastors Information Resource Council).

Churches CANNOT

- ❖ Endorse candidates.
- ❖ Contribute church funds or services to candidates or Political Action Committees.
- ❖ Contribute church funds for political events that are clearly partisan.
- ❖ Allow candidates or political parties to solicit funds on church property.
- ❖ Create a Political Action Committee for the purpose of distributing funds to a candidate or political party.
- ❖ Distribute candidate information that clearly favors one candidate (or political party) over another.