



NBA Community Election Forum Nonpartisanship Guidance

Protect the Integrity of Your Program

The National Bar Association's Election Protection Initiative is nonpartisan. NBA Election Protection programs should educate, inform, and engage communities **without supporting, opposing, favoring, or disadvantaging any political party or candidate**.

Use this guidance when planning and promoting your Community Election Forum. When in doubt, pause and seek guidance before proceeding.

Keep the Purpose Clear

Your program should have a clear nonpartisan civic or educational purpose—for example, providing trusted voting information, educating communities about voting rights and Election Protection, discussing issues affecting voters, or helping people understand how to participate and where to seek assistance.

Speakers, moderators, questions, materials, branding, and promotional communications should reinforce that purpose.

A useful test: Would a reasonable attendee believe, based on how the program was designed, promoted, or conducted, that the NBA supports or opposes a candidate or political party?

If the answer could reasonably be yes, seek guidance before proceeding.

Keep the Program Neutral

Substantive and even difficult conversations are appropriate. Nonpartisanship does not mean avoiding important issues.

It does mean applying neutral standards. Questions should inform rather than advocate. Moderators should treat similarly situated participants consistently. NBA materials and event branding should not contain campaign slogans, candidate branding, or partisan messaging.

Partners, speakers, and moderators should understand that participation in an NBA program does not constitute NBA endorsement.

Working With Partners and Speakers

Partners may have missions or activities that extend beyond the NBA Election Protection Initiative. **The NBA-sponsored program itself must remain nonpartisan.**

Before the event, make sure everyone understands the purpose of the program, their role, the applicable ground rules, and what materials or messaging may be used in connection with the NBA program.

If a partner proposes partisan content or activity, resolve the issue before moving forward.

Candidate Participation Requires Additional Review

If candidates or campaigns will participate in an NBA Election Protection program, **contact NBA Headquarters before proceeding.**

Candidate participation raises additional nonpartisanship considerations. Invitations should be based on neutral, consistently applied criteria, and participating candidates should receive comparable treatment with respect to format, speaking opportunities, questions, and event promotion.

NBA Election Protection programs should not include campaign fundraising or solicitation, and no candidate should receive preferential treatment because of their party affiliation, positions, or relationship with the NBA or its members.

Do not finalize candidate participation or invitations until the program has received any required NBA review or approval.

NBA CONTACT:

Elisha Rhodes, NBA Executive Director | executivedirector@nationalbar.org

Courtney Scrubbs, NBA Election Protection Initiative Chair | electionprotection@nationalbar.org

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Before the Program

Before doors open, confirm that:

The purpose is nonpartisan.

Speakers and moderators understand the ground rules.

Promotional and program materials are neutral.

Partner roles and branding have been appropriately reviewed.

Someone is designated to address questions or unexpected issues during the program.

Suggested Opening Statement

This program is presented as a nonpartisan voter education and civic engagement activity. The National Bar Association does not endorse or oppose candidates through this program. Our purpose is to provide trusted information, support meaningful civic engagement, and help our community participate fully in the democratic process.

When to Contact NBA Headquarters

Seek guidance before proceeding when a program involves **candidates or campaigns; proposed partisan content or activity; campaign materials, fundraising, or solicitation; unusual branding or sponsorship requests; significant legal, political, or reputational concerns; or any situation in which you are unsure whether the activity is appropriate.**

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The Standard

Educate. Inform. Engage. Apply neutral standards.

Do not endorse, oppose, campaign, fundraise for candidates, or use an NBA Election Protection program to favor a candidate or political party.

When in doubt, **ask before acting.**