

**YaleWomen**  
**Policy on Lobbying, Advocacy, and Partisan Activity**  
**(Lobbying and Advocacy Policy adopted 2/25/15; Revised as Policy on Lobbying,**  
**Advocacy, and Partisan Activity 5/5/17)**

YaleWomen, Inc. (“YW”) is an organization that operates under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, which prohibits all political campaign activity and strictly limits the amount of lobbying in which a tax-exempt organization can engage. **Prohibited political activity** involves “directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) a candidate for public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity... (and) may result in revocation of tax-exempt status...” (<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/charitable-organizations/the-restriction-of-political-campaign-intervention-by-section-501c3-tax-exempt-organizations>) **Lobbying**, is a form of advocacy, that refers specifically to efforts that attempt to influence particular legislation. While lobbying by 501(c)(3) organizations is not absolutely prohibited, such activity must constitute only a minor part of an organization’s efforts in order for it to maintain its tax-exempt status. In contrast, **Advocacy** that does not include lobbying, is a type of activity that is not limited under IRS rules; it may involve seeking to affect some aspect of society or general public policy, whether by appealing to individuals about their behavior, employers about their rules, the government about its laws in general, or by educating individuals about underlying issues related to a wide variety of topics.

As part of its mission, YaleWomen is committed to advancing women’s voices and perspectives and helping members engage with salient issues at home and around the globe. YW must do so within the constraints imposed by IRS rules. In order to safeguard YW’s 501(c)(3) status under the IRS code, YW absolutely prohibits partisan political campaign activity. Additionally, YW requires that lobbying by the global organization or through YW’s chapters, committees, or other affiliates be kept to a minimum. Although, as a practical matter, YW recognizes that some activity that could be construed as lobbying may occur from time to time within YW settings, the great majority of this activity must be conducted outside YW’s auspices.

Accordingly, YW and its affiliates shall not organize programming in support of lobbying or partisan political campaign efforts or use YaleWomen’s media, meetings, or other structures for lobbying or partisan campaign purposes. In contrast, efforts to educate members about proposed legislation or coming elections may occur. However, if candidates for elective office are invited to a forum, all candidates seeking that office must be invited, and the use/distribution of any educational materials related to political candidates must provide political balance.

In addition, YaleWomen’s media may be used for informational purposes, to bring to

members' attention events or activities that take place outside YW auspices where lobbying or partisan political activity may occur and, with the important exception of campaign-related activity, to organize groups of like-minded individuals to participate, so long as the opportunity to use media for purposes of informing or organizing is made available equally to all groups, regardless of partisan belief or affiliation. Moreover, it is permissible for the YW global organization, its chapters, committees, or other affiliates to engage, without limit, in advocacy activities and to provide education to members about any matter of importance.

YW encourages its members at the global, national and local levels to advance the issues they believe in. Although YaleWomen's members, acting as individuals, remain free to participate in lobbying or partisan political activity as they deem appropriate, when lobbying or engaging in politically partisan activities, members shall not hold themselves out as speaking on behalf of YaleWomen or any of its Chapters or subsidiaries.

Distinct from any legal constraints imposed by IRS rules, and as a matter of principle, YW is a non-partisan organization that conducts its programs and operations in a manner commensurate with this designation. YaleWomen recognizes that its members, across Yale College and the Graduate & Professional Schools, class years, personal and professional interests, hold a wide range of perspectives and opinions. These diverse viewpoints are welcomed by the organization, which is committed to ensuring that women's voices across a broad spectrum, can be heard. Although this objective does not require the organization to avoid activities or programming where political or partisan opinions are aired, it does necessitate that YW media, programming, and activities strive for balance and provide ample opportunity for opposing viewpoints to be heard. In addition to ensuring balanced programming, YW and its affiliates must also foster an atmosphere within YW media, activities, and programs where meaningful exchange of ideas can occur. Individual members who engage in YW activities or the use of YW media are required to be respectful and civil when stating their points of view or responding to the opinions or positions of others; when necessary, YW leaders are empowered to intervene to achieve this end.