



GETTING ENGAGED: DO'S & DON'TS FOR CHURCHES

Acts 22:24-23:10 records the story of the Apostle Paul utilizing his Roman citizenship and position as a Jewish Pharisee for the advancement of the Gospel. Paul's story continues throughout Acts, as his Roman Citizenship opens doors to share the hope of Jesus in high places for years as he makes his appeal to Rome. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 instructs believers that all scripture is given for our instruction so that we are "thoroughly equipped for every good work." Thus, we must ask what we can learn from Paul's example and how we can use our earthly citizenship to advance the Gospel today.

What Pastors and Church Employees May Personally Do

Every Citizen has a Right to Address their Elected Officials

- ❖ Build a relationship with elected officials: attend coffee hours regularly, call, write, or meet with them, offer to pray with for/with them, ask how you can help, share concerns, etc.
- ❖ Invite elected officials to special ministry and community events, worship service, etc.
- ❖ Attend public meetings, including legislative committee meetings, and speak during public comment with a Biblical worldview (See "Public Comment that Counts" Handout)
- ❖ Publicly endorse candidates in their capacity as private citizens
- ❖ Participate fully in political committees that are independent of the organization

What 501 (C) 3's Laws Say You CAN Do

Educate & Inform—Don't Advocate

- ❖ Educate church members about pending legislation and public policy issues
- ❖ Lobby for legislation and spend an insubstantial amount of its budget (up to 5% is safe) on direct lobbying activities
- ❖ Conduct non-partisan voter registration/voter confirmation drives
- ❖ Distribute non-partisan voter education materials, such as non-partisan Issue/Principle Based Voter Guides and scorecards
- ❖ Host forums where all viable candidates are invited and allowed to speak
- ❖ Allow candidates and elected officials to speak at organization functions and events
- ❖ Endorse candidates directly or indirectly on behalf of the Non-profit Organization
- ❖ Endorse candidates from the pulpit based on the faith values

What 501 (C) 3 Laws Say You CANNOT Do

Staying Inside the Bounds of the Johnson Amendment

- ❖ Contribute funds or services (such as mailing lists or office equipment) directly to candidates or political committees
- ❖ Pay fees for partisan political events from organization funds
- ❖ Allow candidates to solicit funds while speaking on organization property
- ❖ Set up a political committee that would contribute to candidates

*This is not an exhaustive list nor should this be construed as legal advice.