

Non-Partisan Political Activity of NARFE Members

Carolyn Billing, District Officer

The original article was written by Morris “Mory” Lewis, National Field Vice President, Region VII and Arthur “Art” Cardner, Colorado Federation Vice President back on June 22, 2001 and was reprinted May 2004. The bi-partisanship mentioned in the article is just as important today as it was back then. **It is important for us as NARFE Members to be non-partisan when representing and participating in NARFE activities.** We have the right to our own beliefs and party affiliation, but these cannot be reflected when representing NARFE.

Original Article

It has been said to many of you before: We spent 30 years under the Hatch Act; we learned little or no political skills; we learned to stay out of politics; we retire and starting the next day, we become wards of Congress and the quality of our life becomes dependent upon how articulate, active, and successful we are in bi-partisan political activity. This message is critical to all of us. Our suggestion to all officers in NARFE is that you share the following approaches with your membership.

- **Always talk NARFE issues and concerns**—not party affiliation of a candidate or elected official.
- **Talk about what he is for and what he is against that affects us**—not farmers or ranchers or liquor store owners but “NARFE”!!!
- **Don’t talk about other political issues or his political party**, because then you get locked into being a party supporter of the candidate. You do not want to be that!
- **We want to be supportive of a candidate on issues that concern us, either pro or con.**
- **Never publicly endorse a candidate but praise his or her support for NARFE issues.** If you endorse some, you lock yourself in. You become a “Democrat” or “Republican”, and the other side will tune you out.
- **Never publicly endorse an amendment or referendum that does not directly affect NARFE but lend support through coalitions on issues that do affect NARFE members.** And, we do that well, very well, with other local and national organizations, such as the forty-one (41) national lobbying organization in the Coalition to Assure Retirement Equity (CARE). That is where we can leverage NARFE positions and ideas.
- **we must have access to all elected officials who can officially affect us.....and that means who’s in office is who we want to be involved with.....who we want to listen to us.**
- **Your party affiliations are your personal business, and you should act on it any way you want. However, you should communicate with elected officials and promote NARFE issues regardless of party affiliation.**
- **When you are speaking for NARFE, about NARFE, with NARFE, to NARFE—bi-partisanship is a creed we must live by or die by!!!**

Why are these things so obvious? **Partisan politics means you are “in” or “out” 50% of the time.** If you speak as a Republican, you are “in” part of the time and “out” part of the time. If you speak as a Democrat, you are “in” part of the time and “out” part of the time. NARFE is going to suffer—either way.

The above are elementary political techniques—things that NARFE members in your Chapter and ours probably **need to learn more about—and think more about—and do more about.** It will strengthen all of us.