

District Election Guidelines

This document is intended for distribution by district governors to their Rotary clubs at the time of the official call for nominations.

A fundamental principle of Rotary is that the best qualified candidate should be selected for service in elective offices. The RI Bylaws prohibit any effort by a candidate, a candidate's supporter, or any Rotarian to influence the selection process in a positive or negative manner, including but not limited to, campaigning or canvassing. The RI Board developed these guidelines to assist Rotarians in better understanding election procedures:

For All Rotarians

- Review and comply with RI's election guidelines as explained in the following documents:
 - *RI Bylaws*: Articles 12 and 13
 - *Rotary Code of Policies*: Sections 17.030.3(A), 17.040, 19.030, 26.070
(Note: You will find the above documents on www.Rotary.org at Learning & Reference → [Governance Documents.](#))
- Avoid any actions designed to gain visibility, publicize candidates' names and achievements, or give anyone an unfair advantage over someone else.

For Candidates

- Immediately express disapproval in writing of any campaigning activities undertaken on your behalf and ask for the actions to cease.
- Do not respond in a similar manner to another candidate's improper activities.
- Do not communicate with or visit clubs involved in the election, except to fulfill necessary functions. If there are any concerns that a current assignment or a new assignment may give an appearance of campaigning, consult with the district governor. Routine performance of assigned activities is not a violation of Rotary's election policies.

From Rotary Code of Policies, September 2020

17.040.1. Guidelines for District-Level Elections

The governor shall send the current election guidelines found in Rotary Code section 26.060.4., as well as the following list of election guidelines to all clubs at the time of the official call for nominations:

Rotarians and election candidates shall

- 1) Learn and follow both the spirit and the letter of RI's election guidelines
- 2) Consult with knowledgeable Rotarians about current or new assignments which may give an appearance of campaigning
- 3) Not undertake personal initiatives to gain visibility, personal recognition, or favor
- 4) Not respond in kind to another candidate's improper activities
- 5) Not communicate with or visit clubs involved in the applicable election except to fulfill necessary functions (*January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 86*)

26.060.4. Rules Regarding Campaigning, Canvassing and Electioneering

It is a fundamental principle in Rotary that the best qualified candidate should be selected for service in Rotary's elective offices. Therefore, any effort to influence the selection process in a positive or negative manner by campaigning, canvassing, electioneering or otherwise is prohibited under the RI Bylaws.

The following rules shall be followed concerning campaigning, canvassing and electioneering for any Rotarian considering election to the office of president, director, Governor, or Council representative, or the nominating committee for any such office.

These rules are designed to ensure that the best qualified candidate is selected for office:

- 1) Rotarians should at all times conform to the prohibitions of the RI Bylaws concerning campaigning, canvassing or electioneering. All Rotarians should observe both the letter and the spirit of the bylaws and refrain from any activity whose purpose or effect is to influence others by promoting or soliciting support for a candidate's or another Rotarian's candidacy. Such activity is repugnant to the spirit of the bylaws and the principles of Rotary and will be grounds for disqualification of a candidate.
- 2) Campaigning, canvassing or electioneering is any action seeking to promote, attack, support, or oppose a candidate, either directly or indirectly, in any medium, including, but not limited to, any action seeking votes, requesting support in a forthcoming election, distribution of literature or promotional materials or other overt actions intended to promote one's candidacy for an elected Rotary office.
- 3) The periods of candidacy for elective office begin when individual Rotarians begin to give serious consideration to submitting their names for a position covered by the RI rules for nominations and elections. Commencing at that time, candidates should be particularly careful to avoid any actions designed to publicize their names or achievements, to call attention to the applicable nominations or elections, or to give candidates an unfair advantage over other candidates for the same position.
- 4) The normal performance of duly-assigned Rotary activities would not be considered to be a violation of the policies related to campaigning, canvassing or electioneering.
- 5) Contacting clubs to inform them to request their concurrence for a proposed challenge or election complaint is not prohibited provided that such contact is limited to the exchange of factual information. *(September 2016 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 28)*

Source: March 1993 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 135, App. E; Amended by June 2001 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 325; February 2007 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 149; April 2016 Mtg., Bd. Dec., 157; September 2016 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 28