



**Voting Matters:
The PFLAG National
“Get Out the Vote” and Voting Guide**

2020 Edition

Dear PFLAG members and supporters:

Thank you for downloading the 2020 edition of *Voting Matters*, PFLAG National's short, resource-rich Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) and voting guide.

This guide is designed to help PFLAG members and leaders stay nonpartisan as they express excitement, maximize involvement and operate successfully within the guidelines set forth by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for 501c3 nonprofit organizations like PFLAG.

The upcoming voting season is getting exciting, with a set of presidential candidates from major political parties who are supportive of LGBTQ+ equality, including an openly gay candidate, our nation's second. *This election is critical*: So much is at stake, and the power of PFLAG's unique united voice of LGBTQ+ people, parents, families, and allies will affect the outcome.

This guide will provide important information to

- Help you share the excitement about candidates and their messages and stories in a way that doesn't put PFLAG's 501(c)(3) status at risk;
- More effectively advocate to get out the vote based on your understanding of the needs of your community;
- Maintain your connection with PFLAG should you choose to run for office yourself; and
- Help you determine how to best meet those needs, whether it's shuttling seniors to their polling places, encouraging young people to vote and helping to educate them to do so, or partnering with local groups on GOTV initiatives.

No matter what actions you take, remember: **PFLAG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; therefore, all election activities must remain non-partisan.** Please take a careful look at our 501(c)(3) guidelines, a list of dos and don'ts to ensure your PFLAG-related activities are in compliance with the law, as failure to comply will jeopardize our IRS tax-exempt status.

Beyond our non-profit status, it's crucial that all feel welcome to attend your meetings and events; in areas that are rural or more conservative, having a place to find support and get education on LGBTQ+ issues is especially crucial, and it's important to keep politics out of the mix as much as possible.

As always, please feel welcome to contact our staff to ask questions or brainstorm ideas, especially our Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Partnerships, Diego Sanchez, at dsanchez@pflag.org or via telephone at (202) 657-6997. Also, please reach out to your Chapter Engagement Coordinator or Regional Director for state- or region-specific information. [You can find a full list of staff and volunteer PFLAG National leaders on the PFLAG National website at pflag.org/about/our-people](#); scroll down for the list and links to email or call directly.

All of us at PFLAG National truly value your leadership and your contributions to this important work, and we look forward to shaping and seeing the results!

501(c)(3) Advocacy Best Practices

As a 501(c)(3) organization, PFLAG and its chapters have some limits on how they advocate, and some notable restrictions on election issues. **PFLAG is not permitted to endorse or oppose any candidate elected to or seeking election for political office.** This rule encompasses all federal, state, and local candidates, and applies to all PFLAG chapters, as well as PFLAG National.

These are rules you must follow when representing PFLAG in person, including at PFLAG chapter and coalition events, as well as online, including use of PFLAG email and social media accounts.

Violating these rules may result in the denial or revocation of PFLAG's tax-exempt status.

DO:

- ★ **Educate** the public about issues relating to an upcoming election.
- ★ **Attend** candidate forums and town hall meetings, whether personally or as a representative of PFLAG.
- ★ **Organize** public forums where ALL candidates are invited and have equal speaking opportunity and coverage, although please note that the event can continue even if all candidates do not participate; the requirement is that it is publicly announced that all were invited to attend and participate.
- ★ **Ask** ALL candidates about LGBTQ+ issues.
- ★ **Wear** clothing that supports specific issues, as long as it cannot be linked directly to a political party or candidate.
- ★ **Issue** public statements in favor/opposition of elected officials' positions on LGBTQ issues.



DON'T:

- ★ **Endorse** candidates in person, in writing, or online.
- ★ **Participate** in any political campaigns or conduct campaign outreach at PFLAG meetings—no flyers, announcements about campaign events, etc.
- ★ **Invite** a candidate or their staff to a PFLAG meeting to recruit volunteers or give out PFLAG membership lists.
- ★ **Donate** to any candidate on behalf of your PFLAG chapter.
- ★ **Engage** in partisan discussion at PFLAG meetings.
- ★ **Wear** clothing/paraphernalia pertaining to or endorsing specific political parties or candidates.
- ★ **Sell** chapter member email lists to campaigns.



Social Media and 501(c)(3) Advocacy Guidelines

The excitement around candidates, especially for the 2020 presidential race, is palpable. With so many qualified candidates—including an openly gay man—it is easy to cross the line from personal excitement shared on social media to PFLAG messaging around advocacy. With this in mind, we offer the following guidelines so that you can share enthusiastically and safely within the 501(c)(3) boundaries shared above.

- ★ We strongly recommend putting a disclaimer on your personal profile that lets people know that the opinions and comments that you share are your own, and don't represent the views of any companies or organizations you work with. See examples below from our staff members.
 - To edit your profile on your computer:
 - Click on your image in the top left-hand side of your screen, which will take you to your profile page. From there, mouseover where it says “Intro” in the top left, and a small pencil will pop up. There you can edit your public profile.
 - To edit your profile on your phone:
 - Click your image at the very top of the page, which will bring you to your personal profile. Click on the space just below your large, centered profile photo and a pop-up will appear that says, “Edit bio.” Click there to edit.



- ★ When moderating your page, and comments move from advocacy in legislation to advocacy around candidates, please apply an even hand, reminding people in a gentle way that we are a 501(c)(3) organization.

 **Andy Heppelle**
@andytoronto

Congratulations @PeteButtigieg @Chas10Buttigieg and @TIME . Good news worth sharing @free_equal @HMilkFoundation @NOH8Campaign @ItGetsBetter @PFLAG @HRC @glaad @MattShepardFDN @TrevorProject @LEAGUEatATT @SFPride @worldpride2019 @OutandEqual @OutLeadership @outsports #LoveWins

 **TIME** @TIME · 5h
TIME's new cover: Mayor Pete Buttigieg's unlikely, untested, unprecedented presidential campaign mag.time.com/AzdggGz

 0:14 134.2K views

8:32 AM · May 2, 2019 from Antioch, CA · Twitter for iPad

1 Like

   

 **PFLAG National ~ #EqualityStartsWithMe!** @PFLAG · 1h
Replying to @andytoronto @PeteButtigieg and 16 others
We are a nonpartisan org—advocating for legislation, though not candidates. We are excited to see so many pro-equality candidates currently seeking to serve.

   1  

- ★ It's okay to share stories about candidates' views on issues of relevance to PFLAGers.
- ★ It's **not** okay to share those stories with endorsement-type language when you share it.

<p>PFLAG National 7 hrs · 🌐</p> <p>It's so important to have these conversations, which will hopefully help move equality forward for our LGBTQ+ loved ones.</p>  <p>USATODAY.COM America is at a gay rights crossroads, thanks to Pete Buttigieg and the Supreme Court</p> <p>1 Share</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p>	<p>PFLAG National 7 hrs · 🌐</p> <p>Mayor Pete 2020! We must show up at the polls to support his candidacy and protect our rights!</p>  <p>USATODAY.COM America is at a gay rights crossroads, thanks to Pete Buttigieg and the Supreme Court</p> <p>1 Share</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p>
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- ★ It's okay to share profiles of candidates for any level office.
- ★ It's not okay to share those profiles with endorsement-type language when you share it.

<p>PFLAG National 7 hrs · 🌐</p> <p>Very exciting to see so many excellent pro-LGBTQ candidates, including a candidate who is openly gay and married!</p>  <p>1 Share</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p>	<p>PFLAG National 7 hrs · 🌐</p> <p>It's time to send a gay man to the White House...here's to the President and First Gentleman!</p>  <p>1 Share</p> <p>Like Comment Share</p>
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- ★ It's okay to share any type of story about candidates on your personal page, with any language you choose, including endorsement.
- ★ It's not okay to share these types of stories in connection with your work as a chapter member or leader.



- ★ With so many qualified candidates voicing support of the LGBTQ+ community, we strongly recommend varying your social media sharing to include a wide range of stories, not just stories about one candidate

Running For Office: PFLAGers as Candidates/ Campaign Leaders

With all of the tremendous advocates who are PFLAG members and leaders, there have been times when a member wishes to run for office or accept an appointed position with a campaign. Here are the legally recommended best practices for adherence to 501c3 IRS guidelines—as well as good ethical practices for us all.

- ★ There is no 501(c)(3) political campaign prohibition against an individual PFLAG chapter leader or member from running for public office. There is also no requirement that the individual must resign their PFLAG board member position to do so.
- ★ It is not necessary for an individual to suspend their fiscal responsibility role in a PFLAG chapter during their candidacy.
- ★ If an individual is elected, the same conclusions apply.
- ★ PFLAG cannot endorse chapter members or leaders for office, and the candidate, if the occasion arises, should make that clear to the public.
- ★ PFLAG facilities and resources, including email addresses, cannot be used in a way that would appear to support or oppose any candidate for office. The candidate should understand this, and not use their position as a PFLAG director to advance their candidacy, although such person's bio could certainly state that they are a member or director of a PFLAG chapter.
- ★ At PFLAG meetings and events, candidates are prohibited from discussing their candidacy, sharing materials, announcing events or wearing clothing buttons or stickers related to any candidacy, including their own or a candidate for whom they are working or volunteering to support.

There are some good examples in Rev. Rul. 2007-41 interpreting instances where an officer of a 501(c)(3) could be seen as representing the position of the organization rather than their own personal position in supporting a candidate. [This may be a helpful resource and can be found at irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rr-07-41.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/rr-07-41.pdf).

We ask that any candidate who is a chapter member or leader please reach out to advise PFLAG National in advance of any campaign activity where your membership or directorship in PFLAG

might come up; we will advise WilmerHale, our pro-bono counsel, about that particular activity before it happens.

If you are a chapter leader or member considering running for office, or taking a position in a campaign, please [reach out to PFLAG National Director of Advocacy, Policy, and Partnerships Diego Sanchez at \[dsanchez@pflag.org\]\(mailto:dsanchez@pflag.org\)](#) to discuss and get support, so that your work for PFLAG—and run for office—both go smoothly and strongly forward.

Voter Engagement

On June 25, 2013, The Supreme Court of The United States (SCOTUS) ruled on The Voting Rights Act (VRA), eliminating Section 4, which required that states be granted permission to enact sweeping changes to voter registration rules. Despite this ruling, Voter Registration drives are ongoing in some states that permit same-day registration and voting. PFLAG supports fully restoring the VRA and opposes states' action to restrict or limit voters' access.

Between voter suppression practices and redistricting efforts, exercising the right to vote must be overt and intentional. **Call 1-866-OUR-VOTE for information regarding what to do if you or someone you know is challenged when they try to vote.**

Voter Registration Information

Voter registration is an important element of PFLAG's mission and vision of creating a world that supports and celebrates diversity; it is crucial that you and everyone you know is registered to vote by the deadline for your home state. Click [here](#) to identify your state's voter registration deadlines, and find helpful forms and a link to register. Alternatively, access the [federal voter registration form](#), which includes instructions on where to mail it in each state to be registered in that state.

[Rock the Vote](#) also offers this information and more by phone (202) 719-9910 and email [info@rockthevote.org], in addition to text alerts and reminders which will be sent to make sure that you don't miss out on any election reminders. [Sign up here](#) for that easy service.

Here are some additional helpful voter registration and GOTV tools:

- [The ACLU Voting Rights Center](#) is an up-to-date clearinghouse on voting action and news.
- [Check your voter status](#) with Rock the Vote

Election Day Information

It's not only important to remind people to vote, but also to assist them in finding their own state guidelines for voting, including how to vote early, how to find the correct local polling place, and what state-mandated documentation they may need to bring with them.

PFLAG National has partnered with Ballot Ready, a digital, state-by-state, nonpartisan website which helps voters create their own personalized voting plan, including registration, ballots, and more. Visit pflagnation.al/ballotready to visit the site and take advantage of all it offers.

In addition to candidates, in at least 35 states' voters will also have to decide whether to accept or reject roughly [150 policy and funding questions](#) in the form of ballot measures. Our partner [BallotReady](#) gives you your state's measures, as does [Ballotpedia](#).

Here are some additional helpful tools:

- [VoteRiders offers free assistance for any eligible voter](#) who encounters barriers to securing their ID to vote, including financial and legal help obtaining underlying documents like birth certificates, change of name documentation, etc.
- For people who are transgender or gender expansive, The National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) has prepared their handy [#VotingWhileTrans](#) tip sheet, designed to be carried to a polling place. [Download your copy](#).
- [The National Conference of State Legislatures](#) offers guidance on how to request and be issued a provisional (also called challenge or affidavit) ballot if prospective voters are challenged when they arrive at the polls. **Idaho, Minnesota and New Hampshire do not issue provisional ballots so state information for them is not on this webpage.**

If you have any questions about this guide, please contact the PFLAG National Staff; we are always here to support you. You can find the complete staff listing at pflag.org/staff.

Remember... #VotingMatters!

