



INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pledge of Fair Campaign Practices

*Note: this is a proposed update and expansion of the Code of Fair Campaign Practices presently distributed by elections officials for candidates to sign. Consider signing both the existing statutory code and proposing that candidates go one step further and commit to the following pledge or a variation tailored to your community's needs. Note that 78 percent of those surveyed indicated that they would be favorably influenced in favor of candidates that pledge to adhere to ethical campaign practices.*¹

There are basic principles of honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect to which every candidate for public office should adhere in order to worthy of the public office that that candidate seeks. Candidates who fall short of adhering to such principles alienate the public from the electoral process and erode the public's trust and confidence in the offices that those candidates seek.

THEREFORE, as a candidate for public office, I pledge to conform my campaign to the following principles:

1. **General.**

- My campaign for public office will adhere to principles of *honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect.*
- My campaign communications will present only *fair, relevant and truthful information* to the voters for their consideration of my candidacy and those of my opponents.

2. **Fairness.**

- The timing of my communications will be such that my opponents will have a meaningful opportunity to respond to any claims I make concerning their positions or qualifications to hold office.

¹ Center for Campaign Leadership, Institute for Governmental Studies, UC Berkeley Survey (conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California), *Public Opinion Towards Political Campaigns*, October 28-November 4, 2002.

- I will not take advantage of any position I hold in the public, private or nonprofit sectors to pressure people to support my candidacy with either campaign contributions or other election help.
3. **Relevance.** Irrelevant information includes appeals to prejudices based on race, sex, sexual preferences, religion, national origin, physical health status, or age, as well as information concerning the candidate's family.
4. **Truthfulness.**
- I will present my positions and record candidly and forthrightly, so that the voters can judge my candidacy for office.
 - I will document all assertions my campaign makes in campaign communications.
5. **Responsibility.**
- I support full participation the electoral process and will take no action to discourage such participation.
 - I will immediately and publicly repudiate those who take actions that either help my candidacy or hurt my opponents' candidacy which are inconsistent with this pledge of campaign conduct.
6. **Respect.** I will treat my opponents with courtesy and civility, even when we disagree about what is best for voters served by the office I seek.

Candidate's Signature

Date