



## **AFSCME COUNCIL 57 ENDORSEMENT PROCESS GUIDELINES**

### **Goals of the Endorsement Process**

- Build Locals' power and credibility in local and regional politics by having consistent endorsement processes for both candidates and issues
- Build Council 57's power and credibility in California politics by making consistent endorsements across Locals for both candidates and issues
- Provide support for Locals to develop strong endorsement processes
- Avoid conflicts over endorsement decisions among Locals
- Avoid wasted resources caused by Locals supporting opposing candidates or sides of an issue
- Finalize Council 57's endorsements before Locals begin to participate in Central Labor Council and AFSCME CA endorsement processes

### **Proposed General Agreements about Endorsements:**

#### **1. What a Council 57 endorsement means for a candidate or issue:**

- The endorsement of AFSCME Council 57 and of affiliate Locals could be listed publicly on campaign materials, websites, in press releases, etc.
- The endorsement would be communicated to Council 57's Locals and members
- The Council and Locals would have the option, **but would not be required** to contribute money and/or volunteers to the campaign of the candidate or issue up to the legal limit for that race

#### **2. General guidelines on process:**

- Locals would keep the option to make their own endorsements as they have done historically, but would be encouraged to use a consistent process to decide on those endorsements as described in the "Steps for Best Practice Endorsements" below.
- Any Local wanting the Council 57 endorsement for a candidate they choose to endorse would be required to use the Council 57 "Best Practice" endorsement process.
- When a Local or group of locals brings a recommendation for endorsement to Council 57 after using the Council's "Best Practice" endorsement process, the Council may or may not choose to follow this recommendation to endorse as a Council.
- The Council's decision to make an endorsement based on the recommendation of a Local or group of Locals or when Locals disagree on a recommendation to endorse will be made by the Council based on the following criteria:

- Number of AFSCME members of different Locals who will be affected by the outcome of the race as measured by number of members working in the district and number of members voting in the district
- Per capita numbers of Local unions involved
- Degree of influence the seat in question has on negotiations and terms of employment of Locals involved (no influence, somewhat influential, direct influence).

### 3. Decision-making rules:

- The basic decision-making rule for endorsements would be to try to achieve consensus among Locals participating in any given endorsement process.
- Where Locals cannot reach consensus, Locals would separate and each Local would attempt to reach consensus among its own members. If an individual Local is unable to reach consensus among its own members, the Local would decide on a recommendation for endorsement by a simple majority vote of members participating.
- Final endorsement decisions of Locals would be made by Local Executive Boards based on the recommendation of their participating members and other criteria that Local chooses to set.
- Final endorsements of Council 57 would be made by the Council 57 Executive Board when the Delegates Assembly is not in session or by the Council 57 Delegates Assembly, as stipulated in Council 57's Constitution. Final endorsements will be based on the recommendation of the Council 57 PAC and the criteria noted above in Sec. 2.

### Proposed Steps for Council 57's "Best Practice" Endorsement Process

All locals would be encouraged to participate in the following proposed annual Council 57 endorsement process. Locals seeking the endorsement of Council 57 for a candidate they endorse would be required to have used this process to receive the Council 57 endorsement. Locals could use this process alone, but would be encouraged to use it jointly with other locals that share an interest in any given race.

The "Best Practice" process would include the following steps:

1. **Plan a timeline** for the endorsement process that allows a minimum of 2-3 weeks of time prior to any Central Labor Council endorsement process. Research timeline for AFSCME CA and Central Labor Council endorsement processes in areas where Council 57 Locals are participating affiliates.
2. **Invite other potentially interested Locals** to participate in an endorsement process together at least 2 weeks before endorsement interviews are planned. (Required if a Local would like to secure matching funds from Council 57 for a candidate contribution or other candidate support.)
3. **Develop endorsement questionnaires for candidates** as necessary in each election cycle including:
  - Congressional
  - Gubernatorial
  - Other generally-elected state candidates such as Controller, Attorney General, etc.

- Senate/Assembly
- County Board of Supervisors
- Local races including: School Board, City Council, Mayor, Special Districts, etc.

Input from Locals: Council 57 Political Director and staff would be responsible for developing questionnaires. The Political Director and staff would be expected to solicit input from Locals on the questions and content of the state-level questionnaires.

State candidate questionnaires: All Locals would agree to use one single version of the state-level questionnaires as candidates elected to these seats will represent members throughout the state. The Political Director would be responsible for finalizing the questions and content of these questionnaires after receiving input from Locals.

Local candidate questionnaires: Where Locals share jurisdiction in a local race (city, county, etc.) Locals would agree to use one single questionnaire. The specifics of these questionnaires would likely vary from one region to another. The Political Director would be responsible for creating a sample questionnaire that Locals could adapt for their particular races. The Political Director might convene Locals to finalize these local race questionnaires or Locals might choose to convene themselves. Locals and/or the Political Director would also develop questions for candidates that could be used in CLC questionnaires.

#### **4. Invite candidates in whom the Council has an interest to complete questionnaires.**

- For state level races – Political Director and staff would invite candidates to complete questionnaires, send out questionnaires by U.S. mail or email, set a timeline for questionnaires to be completed and returned, make sure they are returned in a timely fashion, etc.
- For local level races – Local leaders or staff as appropriate would invite candidates to complete questionnaires and etc. as above.

#### **5. Review and grade questionnaires.**

For each endorsement, participating Locals will convene in a grading session to review and grade completed candidate questionnaires.

- The goal of this session would be to evaluate candidates and/or issues and decide which candidates to invite to participate in an interview and which issues to put before members to take a position in support or opposing.
- Local PAC activists, leaders and staff would be invited to this grading session.
- Participants would use a numerical grading form to rank candidate responses and would also use this session as an opportunity to share history and insider information about candidates relevant to the endorsement decision.

#### **6. Prepare candidate interview schedule, questions and agenda for endorsement interviews. The Council Political Director would work with Local leaders and other staff to prepare:**

- Schedule for endorsement interviews including the option of interviewing several candidates on the same day or at the same time as convenient for the members likely to participate

- Appropriate and representative questions to be posed to candidates during endorsement interviews
- An agenda for each endorsement interview event (ex: panel-style interviews, single candidate interviews, town-hall style interviews, etc.)
- Identified roles during the interviews (ex: candidate welcomer, MC, members who will pose questions, etc.)

#### **7. Invite candidates to participate in interviews.**

- For state-level races - the Council Political Director or other staff would invite candidates chosen in the grading session to participate in an interview.
- For local-level races - the Local leader or a member of the Local PAC committee would invite candidates chosen in the grading session to participate in an interview.

#### **8. Interview candidates and develop recommendations for endorsement**

- Interviews would be open to all interested members.
- Copies of the grading sheets and endorsement questionnaires would be made available to participating members at the interview.
- Candidates and candidate staff would not be allowed to observe each other's interviews except in the case of panel interviews.
- After interviews, Locals would develop recommendations for endorsements by consensus if possible, using the decision-making rules above (Part 3 in the "General Agreements About Endorsements" above).
- If possible, the Council 57 PAC members from each participating Local should be present at the interviews to be able to carry recommendations for endorsement to the Council 57 Executive Board.

#### **9. Make recommendations for endorsements to the Council 57 Delegates and Executive Board.**

- Races in which two or more Locals have an interest - Locals participating in this Council 57 endorsement process would forward their recommendations for endorsement to the Council 57 Delegate Body or Executive Board to be finalized. Council 57 PAC members from participating Locals would be responsible for bringing this recommendation to the Council 57 Delegate Assembly or Executive Board.
- Races in which only one Local has an interest – the Local's Executive Board would finalize its own Local endorsement. The Local could forward a recommendation for endorsement to the Council 57 Executive Board as well if the Local has used the "Best Practices" endorsement process and wants to seek a Council 57 endorsement for their candidate as well as a Local endorsement. A Council 57 PAC member from the Local would be responsible for bringing this recommendation to the Council 57 Executive Board.

#### **10. Finalize endorsements and inform candidates.**

Executive Board would finalize Council 57 endorsements at a monthly meeting of Executive Board, at the Quarterly Delegates meeting, or at a specially convened meeting or conference call scheduled at the call of the Executive Board President.