

# SAN DIEGO REGIONAL EAST COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT POLICY

*(Adopted May 25, 2023)*

## **Same as the Chairman's proposal, we have the following values:**

- Member engagement
- Member ownership
- Member representation
- Member voice
- Chamber assistance
- Chamber advocacy
- Chamber influence
- Chamber reputation
- Streamlined Approach
- Additional transparency
- Saves volunteer time for other Chamber priorities
- Simplified process for candidates
- Saves Chamber's staff time (reduces labor cost to the Chamber)
- Expedites the endorsement process

## **Endorsement Sub-Committee creation:**

1. Chamber's Chair-Elect with the advice of the current Chamber Chairman and CEO, shall either serve as or appoint a qualified chamber member to the office of the Endorsement Committee's Co-Chair, and here is why:
  - a. Chamber's Chair-Elect is someone who is recommended by the current Chair, Nominating Committee, and it is approved by the Chamber's Board of Directors. Therefore, no one should have concerns or doubt the integrity of this person.
  - b. It'll give the Chair-Elect official duties and responsibilities for the entire year, making it a perfect practice run for leadership.
2. Government Affairs Chair and its members will appoint a person as the Co-Chair of the Endorsement Committee.

- a. The importance of a Co-Chair is to ensure fairness and availability in the event of a conflict or absence during the endorsement process.

**Duties of Endorsement Committee Co-Chairs:**

1. Co-Chairs are responsible to select the date, time and location of the Endorsement Committee meeting.
2. Co-Chairs will be coordinating with the candidates to select the time and date of the meeting.
3. Co-Chairs are in charge of compiling the meeting agenda.
4. Co-Chairs will be moderating and presiding over the Endorsement Committee meeting.
5. Co-chairs should monitor the proceedings to make sure everyone, including the other Co-Chair, is complying with the Chamber's policies and to make sure the integrity of the proceeding remains intact.

**Members of the Endorsement Committee:**

- All the Chamber's current members in good standing can attend the Endorsement Committee meeting.
- Only one vote per member/company is allowed.

**Conflict of interest policies:**

Any Chamber's member attending an Endorsement Committee meeting who:

- *Works for, directly or as a consultant (in a paid capacity), any candidate, elected official or policy campaign; or for a consulting firm representing a candidate campaign under consideration;*  
*or who has a direct financial interest – separate than a general economic interest in respect to the business community of San Diego County - in an issue or candidate, must disclose the relationship or interest, and shall not participate in or be present for: any candidate presentations (other than their own client's), any Committee discussion, or any vote on that candidate or matter. The relationship must be disclosed prior to or upon commencement of hearing the issue or candidate that is subject of the conflict is introduced and, prior to presentations, any member(s) with a conflict of interest must leave the room (unless they are making the presentation on behalf of the candidate, or the issue under consideration, or observing their own client's presentation).*

- Meetings of the Endorsement Committee are considered private events open to all Chamber Members, staff or guests of the Co-Chair. Recording of any portion of a Endorsement Committee meeting by members or guests is prohibited without the express written consent of all members and guests present.

**Offices to be considered are those overlapping East County Chamber’s service areas, which include (but are not limited to):**

1. City Council – El Cajon, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee.
2. Schools & College – East County Elementary and High School Districts, Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District.
3. Water Boards – Helix, Otay, Padre Dam, Lakeside.
4. State Assembly.
5. State Senate.
6. House of Representatives.
7. Grossmont Healthcare District.
8. Board of Supervisors - Covering East County specifically.
9. Countywide Offices - District Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, San Diego County / CA Judges and Assessor-Recorder-Clerk.
10. In addition to endorsing Candidates, Endorsement Committee can also make recommendations to support or oppose initiatives, pending legislations proposed by public officials, and or agreeing to sign/ join letters of support or oppositions proposed by other Chambers or business organizations. (Duties which previously was done by Rapid Action Team)

**Criteria for Endorsement**

The candidate must demonstrate understanding of business issues and policies that promote a vibrant economy and job creation. When evaluating the candidate’s qualifications, the Endorsement Committee will consider:

- Experience in business.
- Record in previous public office.
- Understanding of the public policies handled by the office being sought and how those policies impact the economy.

- Understanding of the budget and management of the office sought and related agencies.
- Affirmative proposals for how to improve the efficiency of the office sought.
- Affirmative proposals for how to encourage economic growth, prosperity, and job creation through the office sought.

### *Viability*

The candidate must demonstrate the ability to win the election. When evaluating viability, the Endorsement Committee will consider:

- Previous offices held.
- Name identification.
- Campaign finance goals, fundraising plan, and ability to meet those goals.
- Biography and qualifications.
- Grassroots support.
- Professional support.
- The strength of other candidates.

### *Distinction*

The candidate must demonstrate that within the field of candidates, they are best qualified for endorsement. When evaluating the distinction of a candidate, the Endorsement Committee will consider:

- Differences in policy issues.
- Differences in leadership style.
- Differences in experience.

### **Endorsement processing guidelines:**

- Chair/Co-Chair shall prepare a questionnaire in consultation with the Government Affairs Committee's Chair and Vice Chair not exceeding two pages and ten questions. Questionnaires may be modified and unique for each office sought but shall be the same for all candidates for the same office.
- Chair/Co-Chair must send the meeting agenda to Chamber's CEO at least one day before any meeting.
- Chamber's CEO must make sure the agenda is sent to all members via e-mail.

- Chamber's staff under the CEO's leadership must check and ensure member attendees are qualified to vote (check their membership status and make sure only one person per membership gets a voting card if the meetings are in person).
- At the event of in person meeting all qualified voting members will be issued a voting card (can be a simple colored card that they can raise during voting).
- At the discretion of Co-chairs meetings could be done on Zoom and or be Hybrid meeting.
- All candidates seeking the Chamber's endorsement and any qualified Chamber's member who wants to be involved in the endorsement process must appear in-person or via remote software (as approved by the Co-Chairs) at the location, date, and time that Co-Chairs has selected.
- Endorsement Committee only considers endorsing candidates who made an appearance in the endorsement committee meeting. Candidates are allowed to send their representative to appear on their behalf if approved by the Co-Chairs upon demonstration of good cause. Appearance by a candidate is strongly encouraged.
- Each candidate gets a maximum of 7 minutes to present their opening statement and/ or conduct Q&A.
- Only one candidate and their staff are allowed at a time. All other candidates and their staff must not be present while their opponent is presenting.
- After all candidates are heard the chair/co-chair will call for discussion during which all candidates and their staff must leave the room. Discussion shall not exceed 15 minutes for all candidates for a particular office under consideration unless additional time is approved by the Co-Chairs upon consultation with the Committee Members present.
- Operation of the Committee shall generally follow Robert's Rules of Order unless otherwise stated in these Guidelines. There must be a motion and second to consider any action regarding the endorsements.
- In order to endorse a candidate, over 50% plus one of endorsement committee voting members must vote in favor of a motion for it to be qualified for recommendation to the Board of Directors.
- Members of the Endorsement Committee should be present for interviews of all candidates running for the same office.

- Endorsement Committee can only make early endorsement recommendations if the candidate is an incumbent all other candidates will only qualified for early endorsement at 2/3 vote recommendation of the Government Affairs Committee and action by the Chamber's Board of Directors.