

MOUNTAIN VIEW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ENDORSEMENT POLICY AND PROCESS

PRINCIPLES

- The Chamber is non-partisan and will support elected positions, measures and initiatives that further our mission, goals and objectives
- The Chamber Board will make decisions based on sound judgments and endorsement criteria, and will make our process as clear and transparent as possible.
- The Endorsement Committee is appointed by the Chamber Board to research, analyze, and present recommendations to the Chamber Board on local elected officials. Ballot measures are to be handled by the Business Information and Public Policy (BIPP) Committee.
- In rare circumstances, the CEO may make a recommendation to the Chamber Board to have the Endorsement Committee take on a particular issue. The process for candidates and taking positions on measures/policies will be similar; it is assumed for measures, initiatives and/or policies that two leading experts/spokespersons (one pro, one con) will be identified and will be treated in the same manner as a “candidate”.
- Candidates and measures selected for endorsement consideration must align with the Chamber’s [Public Policy Principles and Priorities](#), and must have significant impact on the business community.
- Candidates that are ultimately endorsed must commit to work with the Chamber to understand and take into account the concerns and interests of our Chamber’s members.
- The Chamber will seek to hold our elected officials accountable for the decisions they make—or don’t make.

An endorsement by the Chamber of Commerce means:

- The candidate may name the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce as an endorser in public statements and campaign materials; ballot measure or legislative group can name the Mountain View Chamber of Commerce as stating it is supporting the initiative or opposing it, depending on the outcome of the recommendation
- The Chamber will announce its endorsements to Chamber membership and the general public through PR, media outreach, social media, and on its website.
- Any Chamber member that wishes to publicly support a candidate can only state that their affiliation with the Chamber in their endorsement if the Chamber has already officially announced its endorsement of the candidate.
- The Chamber will not display candidate-supplied election materials at our office or on the Chamber website.
- Chamber endorsements **do not** include financial support.

ENDORSEMENT COMMITTEE

The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for determining the measures, policies, and elected positions that will be pursued for endorsement (or opposition), and will look to the Endorsement Committee to present an initial recommended list of candidates. Upon Board approval, the Endorsement Committee will start the evaluation process.

BIPP will submit to the Chamber Board a list of recommended individuals for the Endorsement Committee. Candidates will be considered individually. A three-quarters vote of a quorum of the Chamber Board will confirm appointment to the Endorsement Committee.

The Endorsement Committee will consist of 5-9 Chamber members who, with Board approval, will serve for one election cycle period. Any vacancy that occurs on the Committee during the term will be filled for the remainder of the term upon the Board Chair’s recommendation and the Board’s approval.

Only Chamber members can be on the Endorsement Committee. BIPP members will be given first preference, and then the general membership will be approached if additional seats need to be filled.

Government relations employees should check with their respective companies on policies permitting or restricting participation.

Endorsement Committee members will need to have demonstrated past civic engagement.

The Endorsement Committee will include at least two board members

Every effort will be made to ensure that the Endorsement Committee is representative of the overall diversity of the Chamber membership.

Endorsement Committee members will be asked to affirm a disclosure statement which shows that the individual does not have a conflict of interest and is not an active member of the campaign team of any candidate under consideration.

The Chamber President/CEO will serve as a non-voting member of the Endorsement Committee.

PROCESS

Approximately 150 days before the election, BIPP will determine, and recommend to the Board, what races the Chamber should engage in. Upon Board approval, the Endorsement Committee will reach out to candidates that have filed in these races to let them know of the opportunity to seek the Chamber's endorsement. Candidates must obtain a candidate filing number from California Fair Political Practices Commission in order to be considered for endorsement.

Approximately 120 days before the election, the Endorsement Committee will hold a public Chamber Forum (see details below). The objective is to have the endorsement process complete and approval of endorsements by the Board of Directors no later than three weeks following the Chamber Forum and/or within a week after the filing deadline.

It is noted that in some cases, the above timelines will need to be condensed. The intent is for decisions and actions to be taken as early as possible to maximize relevancy and impact.

The Chamber will offer all registered candidates an equal opportunity to address issues of concern on their questionnaire and/or written statement, as well as at a Chamber Candidate Forum or interview by the Endorsement Committee for those who continue to these phases of the process.

A copy of the Endorsement Policies and Process will be publicly available on the Chamber website.

Information Gathering

Candidates are expected to provide materials and participate in activities as follows:

- Questionnaire and written statement from candidate or representative of measure
- Campaign materials
- Voting records; positions on ballot measures (if available and relevant)
- Individual Candidate interviews with the Endorsement Committee
- A Candidate Forum

Questionnaire/Written Statement

Candidates that express an interest will receive an initial screening questionnaire to complete, asking background information and other information pertinent to such an endorsement, including why they are seeking the Chamber endorsement. Candidates will be informed that their answers to these questions may be made available to the general public. The Endorsement Committee will make every attempt to get responses from each candidate; however, only candidates who have responded to the questionnaire and answered a minimum threshold of questions will move forward to the Candidate Forum and/or interview stages of the process. [See evaluation criteria below]

Campaign materials

Publicly distributed materials (both online and offline) that help to clarify a candidate's position, political views, core beliefs, background, supporters, and other voter-relevant information. We also seek materials that help convey how the candidate views/supports businesses.

Voting Records

If a candidate has held an elected position in the past, or been part of a committee/organization specific to the issues at hand.

Interviews

Each candidate will be offered the opportunity to meet individually with the Endorsement Committee to answer questions that the Committee has drafted based on Chamber member input.

Candidate Forum

Led by the Endorsement Committee, the Chamber will conduct a Candidate Forum with multiple candidates to offer opportunities to hear directly from the candidates and ask questions. It is understood that while an in-person forum is preferred, an online Forum is permitted. The event will be open to the public and recorded for later viewing.

Candidates must attend at least the interview or Candidate Forum (preferably both) to be considered for endorsement. Only extraordinary circumstances will be considered for exemption.

Evaluation and Recommendations

Each interviewer will be given a cumulative scoring sheet (see below), where they will have the ability to rate positions on issues, certain qualities a candidate may bring to the table, and general comments as needed. Applicable questions or qualities will be rated on a scale of 1-5 (five being the best).

Scoring sheets will be created by the Endorsement Committee, and will include questions relevant to the election or initiative. The Committee will also have sourced the membership at large for any concerns they wish to have addressed.

In addition, scoring sheets should allow interviewers to note and evaluate:

- The candidate's business platform compared to the business platforms of the other candidates in the race
- Willingness to listen to and understand Chamber concerns and positions.
- The candidate's general platform as compared to the general platforms of the other candidates in the race
- Clear differences between candidates on issues of concern to business and the Chamber
- Past voting records when available from any credible businesses sources, not just limited to the chamber scorecard
- Leadership Skills/Personal and Professional Background; Do they have the skills and experience necessary to make them effective leaders and policy makers? Do they have the respect of their peers?
- Other Endorsements; What other groups have endorsed the candidate? Do they have support from like-minded organizations?
- With what issues is the candidate identified with?
- What are their main campaign points/platform?
- Membership on Committees/Task Forces (if applicable), level of influence; Are they members of key committees or caucuses? What is the impact they have?
- Is this someone who the Chamber will be able to work with?

After candidates have completed their interview process, Committee members will meet to discuss candidate qualifications and possible endorsement recommendations. Deliberations on endorsement will be kept strictly confidential.

Each interviewer will be required to openly discuss his or her thoughts on each candidate. At the least, high and low scores on the cumulative scoring sheet should be discussed among the interviewers. Personal impressions, individual remarks, and notations should also be discussed among the group.

In order for any candidate to be recommended to the Chamber Board for endorsement, they must receive three-quarters support of the Committee members. If three-quarters of the Interview Committee cannot support a particular candidate or measure, then no recommendation will be made.

Summaries and recommendations will be documented for presentation to the Board of Directors.

It is recommended that summaries and recommendations of the Endorsement Committee be presented to BIPP prior to presentation to the Board of Directors. This would be an informational presentation and not subject to a vote.

Approval of Recommendations

The Chamber Board of Directors is the final decision-making body on any endorsements.

The Committee will report out on their process and findings, and make a recommendation at a meeting of the Chamber Board of Directors with a quorum present.

For at-large elections where one or more seats are to be filled, each candidate will be considered individually, with a separate motion for each one. The number of candidates endorsed by the Chamber does not need to be equal to the number of seats to be filled.

For each and any motion regarding a candidate, a three-quarters approval of the Chamber Board members present is required for the endorsement to become official. A roll call vote will be recorded internally.

The Endorsement, the criteria on which it was based (scorecard) and the Chamber Forum will be made available to the public.

Questions about the board's position on endorsements should be referred to the President/CEO.

ANNOUNCEMENT

At the direction of the Board of Directors, Chamber President/CEO will contact all candidates that sought the Chamber's endorsement to let them know whether or not they have been selected for endorsement. Chamber President/CEO will be responsible for informing the media, Chamber membership and working with Chamber staff on web, print and social media content regarding the endorsement.

REVOCATION OF ENDORSEMENT

All endorsements by the Chamber are final. However, the Chamber reserves the right to revoke its endorsement of any candidate whose actions reflect negatively upon the Chamber's mission. In addition, the Chamber is a stakeholder in the Campaign Ethics Foundation and will abide by their decision on an ethics violation and will retract its endorsement.

Revocation of any endorsement may be called for by any two Endorsement Committee members and/or Board members who supported the endorsement in question. An emergency Board meeting may be called to discuss and vote upon any proposed revocation. A final decision to revoke would need three-quarters support of the Board of Directors.