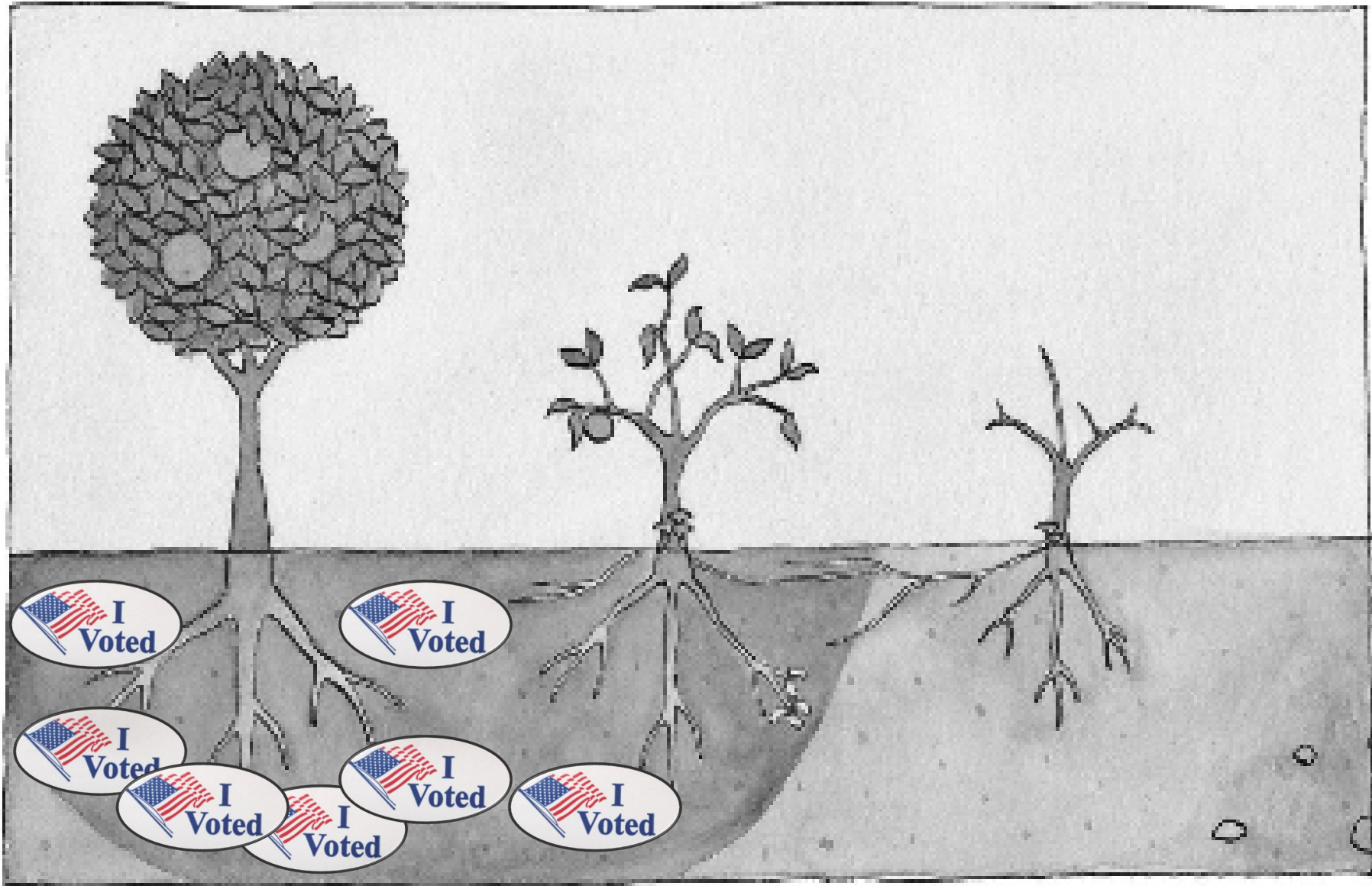


501(c)(3) Civic Engagement: Addressing Political Determinants of Health



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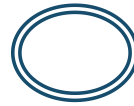
Goal: Address the Political Determinants ... *Safely*

Topics to Cover:

- **Rules for 501(c)(3)s during elections.**
- **GOTV in your communities.**
- **Advance our policy goals without crossing the line.**



Core Principles



- Section 501(c)(3) charities have a right to educate the public and to strengthen democracy.
- Cannot show “bias or preference” for or against a candidate.
- Balance: Keep pushing our policy goals, without indicating (even obliquely) support or opposition to any candidate.



Allowable 501(c)(3) Civic Engagement

- Voter Registration

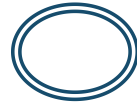
- Get Out The Vote (“GOTV”)

- Candidate Education/Briefings

- Candidate Forums, Debates & Questionnaires



Non-partisan Get Out The Vote



- Easier to conduct, legally safer, and more powerful than voter registration.
- Can use foundation grants.
 - Most grants *prohibit* funds from being used for:
 1. Lobbying
 2. Supporting or opposing candidates
 3. Voter registration drives



What are the Boundaries?



- Must be non-partisan: Cannot support a particular candidate or party
- Messaging
 - Cannot align with a candidate
 - Safer to mention panoply of issues
- Targeting – Either:
 - Everyone in the public; or
 - Historically underrepresented communities – e.g., BIPOC, women, youth
- No issue-based targeting
 - Young Black women = OK
 - Young Black women environmentalists = Not OK for 501(c)(3) GOTV

**CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS
HAVE BEEN FOUND IN OUR
DRINKING WATER.**



**IF YOU THINK KIDS NEED
SAFE WATER TO DRINK, **VOTE.****

North Carolina is changing.

Most of us are struggling to make ends meet.
To truly transform NC, we need:

- Economic opportunity through good jobs
- Clean air for healthy communities
- Affordable access to clean energy

Your vote is your voice at the ballot box.
Refuse to stay **silent** on November 6.

Where Can I Reach People with GOTV?



Candidate Briefings



- 501(c)(3)s may educate candidates on issues.
- Must be available equally to all candidates for a given office.
- Materials or in-person briefing – or both.
- Must stop when you have success.
 - E.g., you can't write speech for them



Candidate Briefings



Candidate Guide to *Think Babies*



Want to build a better future? It begins with babies.

The science is clear. Our brains grow faster between the ages of 0-3 than any later point in life. When babies have nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers, enriching early learning experiences, and strong physical health and nutrition, they have a crucial foundation for healthy development. But when babies don't get what their growing brains need to thrive, they face life-long developmental, educational, social, and health challenges.

Working families need quality, affordable child care options now.

Good child care policy solutions will:

- Be properly funded and ensure that every eligible family can enroll their child in a high-quality program;
- Provide enhanced federal, financial support for services for infants and toddlers to focus on improving quality and access; and
- Guarantee that child care providers can be paid a living wage.

Candidate Forums



- Goal: Educate the public about all of the candidates.
- Must invite all candidates for a given office:
 - Equal availability to all
 - Viability threshold allowed
- Neutral moderator
 - E.g., Respected local journalist
- Breadth of issues
 - No yes/no question – open-ended
 - No candidate pledges



Allowable 501(c)(3) Advocacy

Public Education: Public Statements

- First Amendment speech rights remain during election season.
- Lobbying is OK (within c3 limits).
- IRS must distinguish permissible policy statements from “sham issue ads.”



Allowable 501(c)(3) Advocacy



Public Education: Public Statements

Factors indicating a communication is political:

- It identifies a candidate;
 - It reflects a view on a candidate's actions;
 - The timing coincides with an election;
 - It refers to voting or to an election;
- It identifies a candidate's position on a public policy issue, and that issue has been raised as distinguishing the candidate from other candidates for that office;
 - It is *not* part of an ongoing series of substantially similar advocacy communications by the organization on the same issue; and
 - The timing is not related to non-electoral event (e.g., a scheduled legislative vote).

Personal Activity



- Your free time is yours – do what you want.
- Don't use organizational resources when supporting candidates.
 - E.g., email address, donor lists, copy machine.



Key Takeaways



- 501(c)(3)s can play a big role in elections to strengthen democracy – maybe more than you think.
- Engage in appropriate candidate education to advance your organization’s policy positions.
- No candidate pledges, or indicating a candidate has taken the “right” position.

