

ADVISORY OPINION 2022-2 REGARDING THE PROMOTION OF PETITIONERS
AT CHAPTER AND GROUP MEETINGS

The Inspectors were asked whether a member attending a chapter or group meeting is permitted to mention petitioners and ask members if they'd like to sign or to notify them of the opportunity. Additionally, the member asked if the outcome changes if the meeting is held in-person or via a Zoom call.

We are of the opinion that members must be given that right and the outcome does not change if the meeting is held in-person or via Zoom.

Our standing Rules provide that candidates or their proxies must be given a reasonable opportunity to solicit votes and promote their views. Standing Rule Section 5.6.1 (a) (i) states that, “Candidates for Director shall be provided reasonable opportunity to solicit votes and to promote their views...”. Standing Rule 5.6.1(f) further provides that, “Candidates or their proxies may speak to groups of Club members about their candidacy at regularly scheduled meetings and outings as long as no additional Club funds are spent.”

So, our Standing Rules make it clear that candidates must be afforded a reasonable opportunity to promote their candidacy at regularly scheduled Club meetings. These Standing Rules, however, speak of “candidates”, not petitioners. Do the rules above apply to petitioners as well? They do. SR 5.3.1 (c) states that, “The provisions of Standing Rules 5.2.1 through 5.6.2 apply equally to petitioners and nominees (candidates).”

As a result, we believe members must be allowed to mention at chapter and group meetings (whether held in-person or via a Zoom or similar call) that a member is seeking petition signatures and to provide information on how to sign a petition if interested. We note that members must be given a “reasonable opportunity” to do this. As a result, reasonable limitations on this right (for example, the length of such presentations) may be properly imposed, so long as they are equally enforced on all petitioners.

For the Inspectors,

Steve Krieg,
Chief Inspector of Election

Source:

<https://community.sierraclub.org/page/board-election-rules-and-documents>

linking to:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DdEHIAzhnQA_cQ7UjeJaxfE-RQi95kp5/view

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