



NPCA POLICY REGARDING ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

FINAL – Adopted by the NPCA Board of Directors, March 2020, and approved by legal counsel

I. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to guide NPCA advocacy activity, outline advocacy assistance and capacity building support NPCA can provide affiliate organizations, and to clarify distinctions between NPCA's direct advocacy on behalf of Peace Corps and its capacity-building efforts to enhance its affiliates' effectiveness in pursuing their own priorities. This latter clarification is needed to ensure that NPCA can effectively build the broadest, bipartisan support for the Peace Corps while at the same time enhancing its efforts to strengthen affiliates' capacity for effective advocacy.

II. Background

National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) is a community-driven social impact organization that champions a lifelong commitment to Peace Corps' ideals. NPCA promotes and supports a united and vibrant Peace Corps and Peace Corps community, including current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers, current and former staff, host country nationals, family and friends in our effort to create a more peaceful world.

The Purposes of NPCA, as captured in the first article of our bylaws, include, "*to advocate for and support the Peace Corps,*" and "*to foster and support NPCA Affiliate Groups and extend the network of such groups.*"

These purposes are further reflected in the goals of the NPCA Strategic Plan, 2019–2021:

1. Help the Peace Corps be the best it can be;
2. Empower members and affiliate groups to thrive; and
3. Amplify the Peace Corps community's global social impact.

One of NPCA's greatest strengths is the number, scope, and impact of its network of independent affiliate organizations. Having worked at the grassroots level in over 141 countries, the Peace Corps community is eminently positioned to educate the public on international affairs issues. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) can call on their personal experiences as Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) to appeal to both the heart and the mind in their advocacy efforts. In recent years, there has been a growth in cause/content driven affiliate groups and workplace-based affiliate groups in a variety of federal agencies. In addition, regional and country of service affiliates have undertaken a wide variety of activities to create social change at the community, state and national levels in the United States and in the countries in which they served.

NPCA's direct advocacy at the national level is focused on helping the Peace Corps be the best it can be. NPCA advocates in conjunction with its members to: increase federal funding for Peace Corps and the federal international affairs budget; empower Peace Corps through legislation or authorization; and ensure its organizational independence. NPCA also advocates for greater support for currently serving PCVs and RPCVs such as improved health care, overseas security, or greater support for those disabled during service.

NPCA also works to empower its affiliates and individual members to achieve their specific goals. The goals of NPCA affiliate groups vary greatly. Many affiliates are specifically organized to advocate, either on behalf of the people and culture of their country of service (e.g., "friends of" organizations), or on topics of international interest (e.g., refugees or global environmental action). Other affiliates are committed to issues specific to the Peace Corps community, breaking down barriers among people from diverse backgrounds, or addressing issues of importance within their own states or communities such as refugee integration, poverty, or environmental stewardship.

While the work of NPCA's affiliates draws in many of our members, the issues and topics supported are not necessarily universally supported among NPCA membership. NPCA has not historically and will not in the future restrict advocacy positions or activities of the affiliates as long as they do not conflict with the goals or policy of NPCA.

III. Policy Statement Regarding Affiliate Advocacy

- a. **Affiliate Action:** NPCA welcomes and encourages advocacy action and grass-roots activism among all its members and affiliate groups.
- b. **Independence of Affiliate Advocacy:** NPCA does not restrict or limit advocacy goals among its affiliate organizations beyond requiring that they do not directly conflict with the advocacy goals or policy of NPCA. The advocacy efforts, goals, objectives, and tactics of NPCA affiliate organizations are strictly those of the affiliates and are independent from NPCA. NPCA will not endorse the advocacy actions of individual NPCA affiliates outside NPCA's Focus Areas (listed below) without majority approval of the Board.
- c. **Support for Affiliate Action:** When resources permit, NPCA may provide affiliate organizations with tools and resources to help them organize and disseminate their message. NPCA also may make affiliates aware of other organizations working on specific issues and share information about affiliate actions with the broader NPCA community.
- d. **Affiliate Capacity Building:** When resources permit, NPCA will strengthen the capacity of members and affiliate groups to enable more effective advocacy, either in concert with NPCA advocacy efforts or toward their own advocacy goals. Capacity building activities may include, webinars, access to "letter campaign" software, the sharing of information, and/or-promoting collaboration across affiliates engaged on similar actions. Capacity building activities must be certain to avoid endorsement.

- e. Education and Information Sharing: NPCA may share messages or updates from affiliates to the NPCA members on an occasional basis. However, NPCA will not endorse specific affiliate global advocacy actions or provide special promotion such as “stand-alone” NPCA messages to our network without Board approval. All messages from affiliates that are distributed will include a disclaimer noting that NPCA does not endorse the content thereof.
- f. Prohibitions on use of NPCA Identity: The NPCA logo will not be available for use in affiliate group advocacy actions (e.g. NPCA logo cannot appear on an invitation for a group call to action or other endorsement message, NPCA banner cannot be used at advocacy marches/demonstrations).
- g. Affiliate Requirements: NPCA can only provide advocacy support or capacity building assistance to affiliates that are current in their affiliation reporting and are in good standing (through the annual re-affiliation process) with NPCA.

IV. Policy Statement Regarding NPCA Advocacy

- a. Focus Areas: NPCA’s direct advocacy efforts will generally focus on:
 - Peace Corps legislation and policies, including and especially annual Peace Corps appropriations;
 - General support for a strong U.S. international affairs budget (which includes Peace Corps funding); and
 - Policies that promote domestic and international service.
- b. Non-Partisan Reputation: In order to maintain NPCA’s critical non-partisan reputation and build bipartisan support for the Peace Corps, NPCA will maintain a strict non-partisan approach to *all* its advocacy efforts. NPCA will refrain from advocacy on issues—other than the Focus Areas outlined above—that could negatively affect its nonpartisan reputation.
- c. Status as a 501(c)(3) Organization: As a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, NPCA will not engage in any activity in conflict with that status including but not limited to: any partisan political activity, such as endorsing, donating or otherwise supporting a candidate for public office; or distributing or promoting campaign questionnaires or materials.
- d. Data Sharing: Advocacy activities will follow NPCA’s Data Sharing policy.
- e. Lobbying: NPCA will ensure that its activities for pursuing Federal Government policy or funding:
 - 1) remain within the lobbying restrictions of 501(c)(3) organizations; 2) are performed in accordance with the obligations under Lobbying Disclosure Act; and 3) comply with the restrictions in federal law, including the Byrd Amendment. Note: the Byrd Amendment: 1) prohibits lobbying with federal funds (appropriations); and 2) if the entity is lobbying for a particular allocation of funding (i.e. a grant, contract or award), requires disclosure of “lobbying contacts on behalf of the person *with respect to* that Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.”

###