

A Civic Federation member delegate introduced this motion at the May 3rd Civic Federation membership meeting. Please note that the Civic Federation chair has not yet referred this motion to a Civic Federation committee and that a Civic Federation member delegate raised a point of order at the May 3rd Civic Federation meeting that this motion is out of order on the grounds that it is a political matter and is therefore inconsistent with the Civic Federation's bylaws "The object of the Federation shall be to promote the general welfare of Arlington County and vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner." If the chair rules the motion in order, the motion may be heard and considered by Civic Federation member delegates at the next Civic Federation meeting on June 7th.

Whereas School Board elections are legally and wisely supposed to be nonpartisan;

Whereas political parties routinely endorse school board candidates;

Whereas no candidates for school board in recent years has won office without a political party endorsement;

Whereas the practice of party endorsements discriminates against school board candidates who are federal employees because they cannot seek or receive a political party endorsements;

Whereas the School Board of Arlington may not obtain its best leadership when large numbers of citizens such as federal employees and political independents are discouraged from competing in School Board elections;

Whereas the common practice that the political party imposes at the party caucus of signing a "loyalty" oath to only support the party-endorsed candidate further discourages broad-based participation and contributes to a climate of cynicism and is anti-democratic.

Whereas the current party endorsement process effectively concentrates power in the hands of several hundred party activists;

Whereas the practice of non-partisan school boards is widespread and has proved successful in removing much politics from the classrooms. Whereas the strengths of partisan school board races are quite modest such as increasing voter participation and increased pressure on candidates to disclose their views;

Be it resolved that the Civic Federation calls on the political parties of Arlington, Virginia to refrain from endorsing School Board candidates.