

GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATIONS' INVOLVEMENT WITH CITIZENS TO SUPPORT MI WOMEN & CHILDREN BALLOT QUESTION COMMITTEE (BQC)

(developed for 501 (c) 4 nonprofit organizations)

1. Organizations can give to the Ballot Question Committee from their general funds. We recommend that their Board authorize this donation at a Board meeting and include it in the minutes.
2. Organizations can communicate (verbal & written) with their members and ask them to vote "NO" on the referendum/ballot issue.
3. Organizations should not collect funds from individuals, deposit these funds, and then write a check from their account. Instead, individuals, businesses, or groups should make their checks out to the BQC. (See examples: #5, page2)

NOTE: All checks should be made out directly to *Citizens to Support MI Women & Children*. Donations to a ballot question committee are not tax-deductible.

4. Definition:

IN-KIND – services, goods or facilities provided to the committee at no cost or at a discount.

Examples:

- A. If an organization directly supports the BQC by spending the organization's funds (other than communicating with their own paid membership) to pay for printing costs, mailing charges, travel expenses, speaker fees, etc., it will be necessary to report these expenses as an in-kind contribution to the BQC.
- B. If an organization's paid staff directly supports the BQC (other than by communication to their paid membership) during regular working hours, the value of these services must also be reported as in-kind. Totals must include gross wages plus federal and state payroll taxes. Volunteer services are not reportable.
- C. An organization may hand out BQC materials and, under some circumstances, insert them into a regular mailing to their membership. Postage may be pro-rated based on the size of the mailing. If the mailing qualifies as an "independent expenditure" (i.e. not made at the direction or control of BQC), then the \$500 limit does apply and, if the pro-rated postage amount is \$500 or more, a committee must be formed. If the mailing is made at the direction or control of BQC, then the pro-rated postage amount must be reported as an in-kind contribution and the \$500 limit does not apply.

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- D. If an organization sends a mailing in support of the BQC to persons who are not the organization's paid membership, the rules set forth in 4.C above apply.
- E. If an organization unilaterally prepares a mailing, sends this mailing to its paid membership and asks for contributions to be sent **directly** to the BQC, the pro-rated value of the postage does not have to be reported.

Any of the above in-kind contributions must be reported to the BQC staff so that legal reporting requirements can be met. Please use the IN-KIND Contribution Reporting Form provided

5. Forming a Ballot Question Committee

An organization must register and form a committee within 10 calendar days after it reaches the \$500 threshold.

Examples:

- A. Your organization solicits funds and receives \$500 or more through any fundraising activity which is held for the purpose of making a contribution to BQC and funds are deposited into the organization's account.
- B. Your organization spends \$500 or more opposing the proposal with promotions such as billboards, newspaper ads, radio spots, or printing and distributing fliers which reach outside your membership.