

not issued to Taxpayer by the same company in the same calendar year. The result in this case would be the same if, instead of individually issued MECs, the Original Contracts and New Contracts were evidenced by certificates that were issued under a group contract or master contract and that were treated as separate contracts for purposes of §§ 817(h), 7702, and 7702A.

HOLDING

If a taxpayer that owns multiple modified endowment contracts (MECs) issued by the same insurance company in the same calendar year exchanges some of those MECs for new MECs issued by a second insurance company, the new contracts are not required to be aggregated with the remaining original contracts under § 72(e)(12).

DRAFTING INFORMATION

The principal author of this revenue ruling is Melissa S. Luxner of the Office of Associate Chief Counsel (Financial Institutions & Products). For further information regarding this revenue ruling, contact Ms. Luxner at (202) 622-3970 (not a toll-free call).

Section 430.—Minimum Funding Standards for Single-Employer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

Procedures with respect to applications for requests for letter rulings on substitute mortality tables under section 430(h)(3)(C) of the Code and section 303(h)(3)(C) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 are set forth. See Rev. Proc. 2007-37, page 1433.

Section 501.—Exemption From Tax on Corporations, Certain Trusts, etc.

26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1: Organizations organized and operated for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary or educational purposes, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals.

Exempt organizations; political campaigns. This ruling provides 21 examples illustrating the application of the facts and circumstances to be considered to determine whether an organization exempt from

income tax under section 501(a) of the Code as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) has participated in, or intervened in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Rev. Rul. 2007-41

Organizations that are exempt from income tax under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code as organizations described in section 501(c)(3) may not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

ISSUE

In each of the 21 situations described below, has the organization participated or intervened in a political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office within the meaning of section 501(c)(3)?

LAW

Section 501(c)(3) provides for the exemption from federal income tax of organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable or educational purposes, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided in section 501(h)), and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Section 1.501(c)(3)-1(c)(3)(i) of the Income Tax Regulations states that an organization is not operated exclusively for one or more exempt purposes if it is an “action” organization.

Section 1.501(c)(3)-1(c)(3)(iii) of the regulations defines an “action” organization as an organization that participates or intervenes, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. The term “candidate for public office” is defined as an individual who offers himself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for

an elective public office, whether such office be national, State, or local. The regulations further provide that activities that constitute participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate.

Whether an organization is participating or intervening, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office depends upon all of the facts and circumstances of each case. For example, certain “voter education” activities, including preparation and distribution of certain voter guides, conducted in a non-partisan manner may not constitute prohibited political activities under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. Other so-called “voter education” activities may be proscribed by the statute. Rev. Rul. 78-248, 1978-1 C.B. 154, contrasts several situations illustrating when an organization that publishes a compilation of candidate positions or voting records has or has not engaged in prohibited political activities based on whether the questionnaire used to solicit candidate positions or the voters guide itself shows a bias or preference in content or structure with respect to the views of a particular candidate. See also Rev. Rul. 80-282, 1980-2 C.B. 178, amplifying Rev. Rul. 78-248 regarding the timing and distribution of voter education materials.

The presentation of public forums or debates is a recognized method of educating the public. See Rev. Rul. 66-256, 1966-2 C.B. 210 (nonprofit organization formed to conduct public forums at which lectures and debates on social, political, and international matters are presented qualifies for exemption from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3)). Providing a forum for candidates is not, in and of itself, prohibited political activity. See Rev. Rul. 74-574, 1974-2 C.B. 160 (organization operating a broadcast station is not participating in political campaigns on behalf of public candidates by providing reasonable amounts of air time equally available to all legally qualified candidates for election to public office in compliance with the reasonable access provisions of the Communications Act of

1934). However, a forum for candidates could be operated in a manner that would show a bias or preference for or against a particular candidate. This could be done, for example, through biased questioning procedures. On the other hand, a forum held for the purpose of educating and informing the voters, which provides fair and impartial treatment of candidates, and which does not promote or advance one candidate over another, would not constitute participation or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. See Rev. Rul. 86-95, 1986-2 C.B. 73 (organization that proposes to educate voters by conducting a series of public forums in congressional districts during congressional election campaigns is not participating in a political campaign on behalf of any candidate due to the neutral form and content of its proposed forums).

ANALYSIS OF FACTUAL SITUATIONS

The 21 factual situations appear below under specific subheadings relating to types of activities. In each of the factual situations, all the facts and circumstances are considered in determining whether an organization's activities result in political campaign intervention. Note that each of these situations involves only one type of activity. In the case of an organization that combines one or more types of activity, the interaction among the activities may affect the determination of whether or not the organization is engaged in political campaign intervention.

Voter Education, Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote Drives

Section 501(c)(3) organizations are permitted to conduct certain voter education activities (including the presentation of public forums and the publication of voter education guides) if they are carried out in a non-partisan manner. In addition, section 501(c)(3) organizations may encourage people to participate in the electoral process through voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, conducted in a non-partisan manner. On the other hand, voter education or registration activities conducted in a biased manner that favors (or opposes) one or more candidates is prohibited.

Situation 1. *B*, a section 501(c)(3) organization that promotes community involvement, sets up a booth at the state fair where citizens can register to vote. The signs and banners in and around the booth give only the name of the organization, the date of the next upcoming statewide election, and notice of the opportunity to register. No reference to any candidate or political party is made by the volunteers staffing the booth or in the materials available at the booth, other than the official voter registration forms which allow registrants to select a party affiliation. *B* is not engaged in political campaign intervention when it operates this voter registration booth.

Situation 2. *C* is a section 501(c)(3) organization that educates the public on environmental issues. Candidate *G* is running for the state legislature and an important element of her platform is challenging the environmental policies of the incumbent. Shortly before the election, *C* sets up a telephone bank to call registered voters in the district in which Candidate *G* is seeking election. In the phone conversations, *C*'s representative tells the voter about the importance of environmental issues and asks questions about the voter's views on these issues. If the voter appears to agree with the incumbent's position, *C*'s representative thanks the voter and ends the call. If the voter appears to agree with Candidate *G*'s position, *C*'s representative reminds the voter about the upcoming election, stresses the importance of voting in the election and offers to provide transportation to the polls. *C* is engaged in political campaign intervention when it conducts this get-out-the-vote drive.

Individual Activity by Organization Leaders

The political campaign intervention prohibition is not intended to restrict free expression on political matters by leaders of organizations speaking for themselves, as individuals. Nor are leaders prohibited from speaking about important issues of public policy. However, for their organizations to remain tax exempt under section 501(c)(3), leaders cannot make partisan comments in official organization publications or at official functions of the organization.

Situation 3. President *A* is the Chief Executive Officer of Hospital *J*, a section

501(c)(3) organization, and is well known in the community. With the permission of five prominent healthcare industry leaders, including President *A*, who have personally endorsed Candidate *T*, Candidate *T* publishes a full page ad in the local newspaper listing the names of the five leaders. President *A* is identified in the ad as the CEO of Hospital *J*. The ad states, "Titles and affiliations of each individual are provided for identification purposes only." The ad is paid for by Candidate *T*'s campaign committee. Because the ad was not paid for by Hospital *J*, the ad is not otherwise in an official publication of Hospital *J*, and the endorsement is made by President *A* in a personal capacity, the ad does not constitute campaign intervention by Hospital *J*.

Situation 4. President *B* is the president of University *K*, a section 501(c)(3) organization. University *K* publishes a monthly alumni newsletter that is distributed to all alumni of the university. In each issue, President *B* has a column titled "My Views." The month before the election, President *B* states in the "My Views" column, "It is my personal opinion that Candidate *U* should be reelected." For that one issue, President *B* pays from his personal funds the portion of the cost of the newsletter attributable to the "My Views" column. Even though he paid part of the cost of the newsletter, the newsletter is an official publication of the university. Because the endorsement appeared in an official publication of University *K*, it constitutes campaign intervention by University *K*.

Situation 5. Minister *C* is the minister of Church *L*, a section 501(c)(3) organization and Minister *C* is well known in the community. Three weeks before the election, he attends a press conference at Candidate *V*'s campaign headquarters and states that Candidate *V* should be reelected. Minister *C* does not say he is speaking on behalf of Church *L*. His endorsement is reported on the front page of the local newspaper and he is identified in the article as the minister of Church *L*. Because Minister *C* did not make the endorsement at an official church function, in an official church publication or otherwise use the church's assets, and did not state that he was speaking as a representative of Church *L*, his actions do not constitute campaign intervention by Church *L*.

Situation 6. Chairman *D* is the chairman of the Board of Directors of *M*, a section 501(c)(3) organization that educates the public on conservation issues. During a regular meeting of *M* shortly before the election, Chairman *D* spoke on a number of issues, including the importance of voting in the upcoming election, and concluded by stating, “It is important that you all do your duty in the election and vote for Candidate *W*.” Because Chairman *D*’s remarks indicating support for Candidate *W* were made during an official organization meeting, they constitute political campaign intervention by *M*.

Candidate Appearances

Depending on the facts and circumstances, an organization may invite political candidates to speak at its events without jeopardizing its tax-exempt status. Political candidates may be invited in their capacity as candidates, or in their individual capacity (not as a candidate). Candidates may also appear without an invitation at organization events that are open to the public.

When a candidate is invited to speak at an organization event in his or her capacity as a political candidate, factors in determining whether the organization participated or intervened in a political campaign include the following:

- Whether the organization provides an equal opportunity to participate to political candidates seeking the same office;
- Whether the organization indicates any support for or opposition to the candidate (including candidate introductions and communications concerning the candidate’s attendance); and
- Whether any political fundraising occurs.

In determining whether candidates are given an equal opportunity to participate, the nature of the event to which each candidate is invited will be considered, in addition to the manner of presentation. For example, an organization that invites one candidate to speak at its well attended annual banquet, but invites the opposing candidate to speak at a sparsely attended general meeting, will likely have violated the political campaign prohibition, even if the

manner of presentation for both speakers is otherwise neutral.

When an organization invites several candidates for the same office to speak at a public forum, factors in determining whether the forum results in political campaign intervention include the following:

- Whether questions for the candidates are prepared and presented by an independent nonpartisan panel,
- Whether the topics discussed by the candidates cover a broad range of issues that the candidates would address if elected to the office sought and are of interest to the public,
- Whether each candidate is given an equal opportunity to present his or her view on each of the issues discussed,
- Whether the candidates are asked to agree or disagree with positions, agendas, platforms or statements of the organization, and
- Whether a moderator comments on the questions or otherwise implies approval or disapproval of the candidates.

Situation 7. President *E* is the president of Society *N*, a historical society that is a section 501(c)(3) organization. In the month prior to the election, President *E* invites the three Congressional candidates for the district in which Society *N* is located to address the members, one each at a regular meeting held on three successive weeks. Each candidate is given an equal opportunity to address and field questions on a wide variety of topics from the members. Society *N*’s publicity announcing the dates for each of the candidate’s speeches and President *E*’s introduction of each candidate include no comments on their qualifications or any indication of a preference for any candidate. Society *N*’s actions do not constitute political campaign intervention.

Situation 8. The facts are the same as in *Situation 7* except that there are four candidates in the race rather than three, and one of the candidates declines the invitation to speak. In the publicity announcing the dates for each of the candidate’s speeches, Society *N* includes a statement that the order of the speakers was determined at random and the fourth candidate declined the Society’s invitation to speak. President *E* makes the same statement in

his opening remarks at each of the meetings where one of the candidates is speaking. Society *N*’s actions do not constitute political campaign intervention.

Situation 9. Minister *F* is the minister of Church *O*, a section 501(c)(3) organization. The Sunday before the November election, Minister *F* invites Senate Candidate *X* to preach to her congregation during worship services. During his remarks, Candidate *X* states, “I am asking not only for your votes, but for your enthusiasm and dedication, for your willingness to go the extra mile to get a very large turnout on Tuesday.” Minister *F* invites no other candidate to address her congregation during the Senatorial campaign. Because these activities take place during official church services, they are attributed to Church *O*. By selectively providing church facilities to allow Candidate *X* to speak in support of his campaign, Church *O*’s actions constitute political campaign intervention.

Candidate Appearances Where Speaking or Participating as a Non-Candidate

Candidates may also appear or speak at organization events in a non-candidate capacity. For instance, a political candidate may be a public figure who is invited to speak because he or she: (a) currently holds, or formerly held, public office; (b) is considered an expert in a non political field; or (c) is a celebrity or has led a distinguished military, legal, or public service career. A candidate may choose to attend an event that is open to the public, such as a lecture, concert or worship service. The candidate’s presence at an organization-sponsored event does not, by itself, cause the organization to be engaged in political campaign intervention. However, if the candidate is publicly recognized by the organization, or if the candidate is invited to speak, factors in determining whether the candidate’s appearance results in political campaign intervention include the following:

- Whether the individual is chosen to speak solely for reasons other than candidacy for public office;
- Whether the individual speaks only in a non-candidate capacity;
- Whether either the individual or any representative of the organization

makes any mention of his or her candidacy or the election;

- Whether any campaign activity occurs in connection with the candidate's attendance;
- Whether the organization maintains a nonpartisan atmosphere on the premises or at the event where the candidate is present; and
- Whether the organization clearly indicates the capacity in which the candidate is appearing and does not mention the individual's political candidacy or the upcoming election in the communications announcing the candidate's attendance at the event.

Situation 10. Historical society *P* is a section 501(c)(3) organization. Society *P* is located in the state capital. President *G* is the president of Society *P* and customarily acknowledges the presence of any public officials present during meetings. During the state gubernatorial race, Lieutenant Governor *Y*, a candidate, attends a meeting of the historical society. President *G* acknowledges the Lieutenant Governor's presence in his customary manner, saying, "We are happy to have joining us this evening Lieutenant Governor *Y*." President *G* makes no reference in his welcome to the Lieutenant Governor's candidacy or the election. Society *P* has not engaged in political campaign intervention as a result of President *G*'s actions.

Situation 11. Chairman *H* is the chairman of the Board of Hospital *Q*, a section 501(c)(3) organization. Hospital *Q* is building a new wing. Chairman *H* invites Congressman *Z*, the representative for the district containing Hospital *Q*, to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the new wing. Congressman *Z* is running for reelection at the time. Chairman *H* makes no reference in her introduction to Congressman *Z*'s candidacy or the election. Congressman *Z* also makes no reference to his candidacy or the election and does not do any political campaign fundraising while at Hospital *Q*. Hospital *Q* has not intervened in a political campaign.

Situation 12. University *X* is a section 501(c)(3) organization. *X* publishes an alumni newsletter on a regular basis. Individual alumni are invited to send in updates about themselves which are printed in each edition of the newsletter. After receiving an update letter from Alumnus *Q*,

X prints the following: "Alumnus *Q*, class of 'XX is running for mayor of Metropolis." The newsletter does not contain any reference to this election or to Alumnus *Q*'s candidacy other than this statement of fact. University *X* has not intervened in a political campaign.

Situation 13. Mayor *G* attends a concert performed by Symphony *S*, a section 501(c)(3) organization, in City Park. The concert is free and open to the public. Mayor *G* is a candidate for reelection, and the concert takes place after the primary and before the general election. During the concert, the chairman of *S*'s board addresses the crowd and says, "I am pleased to see Mayor *G* here tonight. Without his support, these free concerts in City Park would not be possible. We will need his help if we want these concerts to continue next year so please support Mayor *G* in November as he has supported us." As a result of these remarks, Symphony *S* has engaged in political campaign intervention.

Issue Advocacy vs. Political Campaign Intervention

Section 501(c)(3) organizations may take positions on public policy issues, including issues that divide candidates in an election for public office. However, section 501(c)(3) organizations must avoid any issue advocacy that functions as political campaign intervention. Even if a statement does not expressly tell an audience to vote for or against a specific candidate, an organization delivering the statement is at risk of violating the political campaign intervention prohibition if there is any message favoring or opposing a candidate. A statement can identify a candidate not only by stating the candidate's name but also by other means such as showing a picture of the candidate, referring to political party affiliations, or other distinctive features of a candidate's platform or biography. All the facts and circumstances need to be considered to determine if the advocacy is political campaign intervention.

Key factors in determining whether a communication results in political campaign intervention include the following:

- Whether the statement identifies one or more candidates for a given public office;
- Whether the statement expresses approval or disapproval for one or more candidates' positions and/or actions;
- Whether the statement is delivered close in time to the election;
- Whether the statement makes reference to voting or an election;
- Whether the issue addressed in the communication has been raised as an issue distinguishing candidates for a given office;
- Whether the communication is part of an ongoing series of communications by the organization on the same issue that are made independent of the timing of any election; and
- Whether the timing of the communication and identification of the candidate are related to a non-electoral event such as a scheduled vote on specific legislation by an officeholder who also happens to be a candidate for public office.

A communication is particularly at risk of political campaign intervention when it makes reference to candidates or voting in a specific upcoming election. Nevertheless, the communication must still be considered in context before arriving at any conclusions.

Situation 14. University *O*, a section 501(c)(3) organization, prepares and finances a full page newspaper advertisement that is published in several large circulation newspapers in State *V* shortly before an election in which Senator *C* is a candidate for nomination in a party primary. Senator *C* represents State *V* in the United States Senate. The advertisement states that S. 24, a pending bill in the United States Senate, would provide additional opportunities for State *V* residents to attend college, but Senator *C* has opposed similar measures in the past. The advertisement ends with the statement "Call or write Senator *C* to tell him to vote for S. 24." Educational issues have not been raised as an issue distinguishing Senator *C* from any opponent. S. 24 is scheduled for a vote in the United States Senate before the election, soon after the date that the advertisement is published in the newspapers. Even though the advertisement appears shortly before the election and iden-

tifies Senator *C*'s position on the issue as contrary to *O*'s position, University *O* has not violated the political campaign intervention prohibition because the advertisement does not mention the election or the candidacy of Senator *C*, education issues have not been raised as distinguishing Senator *C* from any opponent, and the timing of the advertisement and the identification of Senator *C* are directly related to the specifically identified legislation University *O* is supporting and appears immediately before the United States Senate is scheduled to vote on that particular legislation. The candidate identified, Senator *C*, is an officeholder who is in a position to vote on the legislation.

Situation 15. Organization *R*, a section 501(c)(3) organization that educates the public about the need for improved public education, prepares and finances a radio advertisement urging an increase in state funding for public education in State *X*, which requires a legislative appropriation. Governor *E* is the governor of State *X*. The radio advertisement is first broadcast on several radio stations in State *X* beginning shortly before an election in which Governor *E* is a candidate for re-election. The advertisement is not part of an ongoing series of substantially similar advocacy communications by Organization *R* on the same issue. The advertisement cites numerous statistics indicating that public education in State *X* is under funded. While the advertisement does not say anything about Governor *E*'s position on funding for public education, it ends with "Tell Governor *E* what you think about our under-funded schools." In public appearances and campaign literature, Governor *E*'s opponent has made funding of public education an issue in the campaign by focusing on Governor *E*'s veto of an income tax increase the previous year to increase funding of public education. At the time the advertisement is broadcast, no legislative vote or other major legislative activity is scheduled in the State *X* legislature on state funding of public education. Organization *R* has violated the political campaign prohibition because the advertisement identifies Governor *E*, appears shortly before an election in which Governor *E* is a candidate, is not part of an ongoing series of substantially similar advocacy communications by Organization *R* on the same issue, is not timed to

coincide with a non election event such as a legislative vote or other major legislative action on that issue, and takes a position on an issue that the opponent has used to distinguish himself from Governor *E*.

Situation 16. Candidate *A* and Candidate *B* are candidates for the state senate in District *W* of State *X*. The issue of State *X* funding for a new mass transit project in District *W* is a prominent issue in the campaign. Both candidates have spoken out on the issue. Candidate *A* supports funding the new mass transit project. Candidate *B* opposes the project and supports State *X* funding for highway improvements instead. *P* is the executive director of *C*, a section 501(c)(3) organization that promotes community development in District *W*. At *C*'s annual fundraising dinner in District *W*, which takes place in the month before the election in State *X*, *P* gives a lengthy speech about community development issues including the transportation issues. *P* does not mention the name of any candidate or any political party. However, at the conclusion of the speech, *P* makes the following statement, "For those of you who care about quality of life in District *W* and the growing traffic congestion, there is a very important choice coming up next month. We need new mass transit. More highway funding will not make a difference. You have the power to relieve the congestion and improve your quality of life in District *W*. Use that power when you go to the polls and cast your vote in the election for your state senator." *C* has violated the political campaign intervention as a result of *P*'s remarks at *C*'s official function shortly before the election, in which *P* referred to the upcoming election after stating a position on an issue that is a prominent issue in a campaign that distinguishes the candidates.

Business Activity

The question of whether an activity constitutes participation or intervention in a political campaign may also arise in the context of a business activity of the organization, such as selling or renting of mailing lists, the leasing of office space, or the acceptance of paid political advertising. In this context, some of the factors to be considered in determining whether the organization has engaged in political campaign intervention include the following:

- Whether the good, service or facility is available to candidates in the same election on an equal basis,
- Whether the good, service, or facility is available only to candidates and not to the general public,
- Whether the fees charged to candidates are at the organization's customary and usual rates, and
- Whether the activity is an ongoing activity of the organization or whether it is conducted only for a particular candidate.

Situation 17. Museum *K* is a section 501(c)(3) organization. It owns an historic building that has a large hall suitable for hosting dinners and receptions. For several years, Museum *K* has made the hall available for rent to members of the public. Standard fees are set for renting the hall based on the number of people in attendance, and a number of different organizations have rented the hall. Museum *K* rents the hall on a first come, first served basis. Candidate *P* rents Museum *K*'s social hall for a fundraising dinner. Candidate *P*'s campaign pays the standard fee for the dinner. Museum *K* is not involved in political campaign intervention as a result of renting the hall to Candidate *P* for use as the site of a campaign fundraising dinner.

Situation 18. Theater *L* is a section 501(c)(3) organization. It maintains a mailing list of all of its subscribers and contributors. Theater *L* has never rented its mailing list to a third party. Theater *L* is approached by the campaign committee of Candidate *Q*, who supports increased funding for the arts. Candidate *Q*'s campaign committee offers to rent Theater *L*'s mailing list for a fee that is comparable to fees charged by other similar organizations. Theater *L* rents its mailing list to Candidate *Q*'s campaign committee. Theater *L* declines similar requests from campaign committees of other candidates. Theater *L* has intervened in a political campaign.

Web Sites

The Internet has become a widely used communications tool. Section 501(c)(3) organizations use their own web sites to disseminate statements and information.