

## **Code of Conduct for Houston LGBTQ+ Political Caucus**

The Houston LGBTQ+ Political Caucus (“The Caucus”) is committed to creating an inclusive and respectful environment for all members and guests. This code establishes guidelines that promote respect, discourage discrimination, and prevent disruptions during our activities.

While an overwhelming majority of our members and guests exhibit exemplary conduct, rare instances of poor behavior have recently reminded us of the importance of setting clear expectations. Our code of conduct allows us to address issues such as misgendering, racism, violence, harassment, and disruptions, promptly and fairly.

By adhering to this code, we demonstrate our commitment to ethical conduct and fostering a welcoming space where all can participate and contribute effectively.

The following Code of Conduct (“Code”) applies to all Caucus spaces, including but not limited to social media channels, group messages, Caucus meetings, and other public and private Caucus events. In the event of a conflict between this Code and the Bylaws, the Bylaws shall govern.

For purposes of this Code, “members” include Caucus members, volunteers, officers, staff, and guests in Caucus spaces.

### **1. Respectful Conduct:**

All Members must conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner towards one another. Discrimination, harassment, or bullying of any kind, including that related to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ability status, physical appearance, body size, age, or any other personal characteristic will not be tolerated.

### **2. Closed Meeting Confidentiality:**

While The Caucus’ general meetings are typically open to the public, meetings that have been designated as “Closed” and/or “Confidential” may discuss information that is not meant for public consumption. Members should not disclose any such information and should seek appropriate authorization from The Caucus Board before disclosure.

### **3. Conflict of Interest:**

Members are expected to resolve any conflicts of interest that may arise between their personal interests and the interests of The Caucus by declaring these conflicts of interest and recusing themselves from any discussions or decisions pertaining to these conflicts. Members should declare any conflicts of interest that arise and recuse themselves from any discussions or decisions where they may have a personal interest.

4. Compliance with the Law:

Members must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including, but not limited to campaign finance laws, election laws, and lobbying laws.

5. Political Activity:

To prevent unauthorized engagements and maintain consistency within the organization, Members may not claim to represent The Caucus in political activity, including endorsements, without prior written approval from The Caucus Board authorizing the specific Member as a representative of The Caucus.

6. Ethical Conduct:

Members should conduct themselves with the utmost ethical standards and adhere to the highest standards of integrity. Members should avoid engaging in any behavior that may bring The Caucus into disrepute or reflect negatively on its reputation.

7. Communication:

Members should communicate in a respectful and professional manner. Members should refrain from engaging in any form of abusive, threatening, or harassing behavior, whether in person, over the phone, or online.

8. Misgendering and Discrimination:

Members are expected to treat each other with respect and avoid discriminatory or derogatory language. Blatant misgendering, deliberate misuse of pronouns, deadnaming, or discriminatory comments based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or any other personal characteristic will not be tolerated.

9. Violence and Threats:

Any physical violence, threats of violence, or behavior that could reasonably be interpreted as intending to cause harm or intimidation will not be tolerated.

10. Sexual Harassment:

The Caucus will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment, including unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, physical contact without consent (including hugs) or after a request to stop, or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

11. Time Limitations:

Members are expected to abide by time limitations set by The Caucus during meetings or events. Exceeding these limitations may disrupt the flow of the meeting and hinder progress.

12. Meeting Disruptions and Heckling:

Members are expected to engage in constructive dialogue during Caucus meetings or events. Disruptive behavior or heckling will not be tolerated and may result in removal from the meeting or event.

“Disruptive behavior” includes but is not limited to:

- Chanting a candidate’s name from the audience while another candidate is speaking;
- Inappropriately interrupting a speaker without being recognized by the Chair;
- Shouting over a speaker;
- Deliberately disparaging, harassing, disconcerting and/or taunting a candidate, speaker, and/or meeting attendee(s);
- Sharing negative comments, posts, and/or any information with the purpose of devaluing another person; or
- Failing to comply with the decisions of the meeting Chair.

13. Other Rules and Customs:

Members are expected to abide by all other rules and customs set forth by The Caucus, including, but not limited to, respecting the confidentiality of Caucus discussions and adhering to The Caucus' policies and procedures.

14. Enforcement of Appropriate Conduct:

Violations of this Code may constitute grounds for censure, expulsion, or other disciplinary proceedings per Article 3.03 of the Bylaws.

The Caucus is dedicated to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all members and guests. We expect our members to uphold the values and principles outlined in this Code of Conduct and to work together to advance LGBTQ+ issues in the Houston/Harris County region.