

The following charter, framed by The LeRoy Collins Center for Public Policy at Florida State University, reflects some conclusions reached by a convening of citizens at Tallahassee in October 1991. That committee was made up of about 70 experts on government, including lobbyists, journalists and politicians, who came together to develop a code of conduct to promote a more positive and ethical campaign process. The Florida League of Cities strongly supports the concept of fair campaign practices and encourages all candidates for public office to abide by the principles of this voluntary code.

# Florida Voluntary Code of Fair Campaign Practices

## The Candidates

### **PREAMBLE:**

To refresh the people's participation in their democratic process, Florida's citizens should expect their candidates for public office at all levels to observe and uphold standards of fairness and honesty during election campaigns so as to give voters a clear look at the personal values that motivate their candidacies and a clear choice on the political issues that define their differences. Along with the candidates, the news media and the general public play their own parts in the self-governing process.

This voluntary code addresses all three and invites all to subscribe.

As I seek public office in Florida, I honor the following principles as a guide to conduct which the public is entitled to expect of me:

1. I will address valid issues in my campaign, will tell the truth as to my intentions if I am elected, and will fight fairly in any contest with my opponent(s).
2. I will shun demagoguery that seeks to deflect the public's attention to sham issues that obscure real concerns of the electorate.
3. I will limit my attacks on an opponent to legitimate challenges to that person's record, qualifications, and positions.
4. I will neither use nor permit the use of malicious untruths or scurrilous innuendos about an opponent's personal life nor will I make or condone unfounded accusations discrediting that person's integrity.
5. I will take personal responsibility for approving or disavowing the substance of attacks on my opponent that may come from third parties supporting my candidacy.
6. I will not use or permit the use of campaign material that falsifies, distorts, or misrepresents facts.
7. I will neither use nor permit the use of appeals to bigotry in any form, and specifically to prejudice based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin.
8. I will neither use nor permit the use of last-minute charges made without giving my opponent reasonable time in which to respond before election day.
9. I will demand that persons or organizations supporting me maintain these standards of fairness.
10. I will repudiate any abuses of this code.