

## **Policy on Taking Public Positions**

Approved by MAVA Board on July 21, 2004

### **Role of the Public Affairs Committee**

- Study and provide information/education on public affairs issues of interest to MAVA Members.
- Solicit information from MAVA Members and others on timely public affairs issues impacting MAVA Members and the volunteer community.
- Make recommendations to the MAVA Board and Membership with regard to MAVA's platform and public affairs positions.
- Provide rapid response to the media, in public forums, and so forth, consistent with MAVA's Policy on Taking Public Positions as outlined in this document.
- Learn about lobbying/advocacy laws, regulations and policies pertaining to MAVA and 501c3 organizations and assist MAVA to remain in compliance through education and reminders.

### **Authorized Spokespeople**

President and/or Public Affairs Chair and/or their Designees

### **Responsibilities of MAVA Spokespeople**

Be consistent with MAVA's platform and prepared to respond with key messages.

For emergency positions or those that emerge before or after the platform is established, communicate with the Membership and/or Board for comments and/or position approval, wherever possible, prior to speaking/taking action. A timeline for response will be provided and the spokesperson will go with the majority position of those who responded, with the option to indicate that the issue is still under consideration by the organization, if in the judgment of the spokesperson that is the most advisable course of action.

If contacted and an immediate response is required, the designated spokesperson is authorized to speak with the media or organization representative seeking information, using his/her own judgment, consistent with platform, positions and best practices for the field.

Any spokesperson on behalf of MAVA in the area of Public Affairs will notify the Public Affairs Chair and MAVA President of the specific contact, informing them of the fact that the contact has taken place, as well as the content of the communication. Information should also be provided about the response received. In the case of an article or written communication, a copy should be sent to the MAVA Public Affairs Chair and President.

With regard to proactive media outreach, the Membership, Public Affairs Committee and Board will review and approve policy positions prior to making contacts and will work in coordination with the Public Relations Chair. (A timeline for response will be provided and the spokesperson would go with the majority position of those who responded, with the option to indicate that the issue is still under consideration by the organization.)

### **Process for Obtaining Board/Member Approval for Policy Positions**

See above. At MAVA Board Meetings and annual meetings, through surveys which may be in writing or electronically submitted. Posting of information on the website, through newsletters, and so forth will be carried out by the MAVA Administration.

**Rapid Response Policy**

The President/Public Affairs Chair will keep members apprised of timely issues and the overall MAVA platform with assistance from the MAVA Administration. MAVA Members are free to express their own opinions as individuals. Members may not represent MAVA unless they are a designated spokesperson through editorials, policymaker contacts, etc. Public Affairs Committee Members with particular expertise may be called upon as needed by the MAVA President/Public Affairs Chair to be MAVA spokespeople on specific topics. The President/Public Affairs Chair may also designate other qualified MAVA spokespeople from the Membership to speak to issues within their areas of specialty/expertise.

**Public Affairs/Policy Platform Development Process**

The platform will be developed through a written and/or electronic survey of membership, to surface/define issues. The draft platform will be distributed to the membership for review. Each issue will require a majority vote of MAVA Members who participate in the vote. The Public Affairs Committee may prioritize issues in order to determine which one/s to most emphasize.

See rapid response policy above for emergency or emerging issues.