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ICE Employee Resigns with 5-Year Debarment for Flagrant Hatch Act Violations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./August 7, 2018 – The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) today announced a settlement agreement reached with an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) employee who agreed to resign and not return to federal service for five years after committing numerous Hatch Act violations. The employee admitted to posting more than 100 social media messages between March and November 2016 in support of then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton while on duty or in the workplace. She also admitted to, while at work, telling coworkers to vote for Hillary Clinton and inviting them to attend a campaign rally. The punitive settlement terms considered that the employee had significant Hatch Act knowledge and received guidance from ICE via email and annual ethics training, but failed to change her behavior, even after OSC interviewed her.

“When a federal employee emphatically and repeatedly engages in political activity while on duty or in the workplace, OSC takes that very seriously,” **Special Counsel Henry J. Kerner** said. “This employee thumbed her nose at the law and engaged in vocal partisan politics both with her colleagues and on social media. Considering her knowledge of the Hatch Act and continuing disregard for the law, this employee’s resignation and debarment from federal service are proportionate disciplinary actions. This case serves as an important reminder that federal employees must be mindful of the Hatch Act’s prohibitions, especially given the upcoming midterm elections.”

Penalties for Hatch Act violations range from reprimand or suspension to removal and debarment from federal employment, such as this case, and may also include a civil fine. More information about the Hatch Act and how federal employees can ensure they’re in compliance is [available here](#).

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC’s primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.