



U.S. Office of Special Counsel
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 218
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

OSC Files Complaint for Disciplinary Action in Hatch Act Case

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Nick Schwellenbach, (202) 254-3631; nschwellenbach@osc.gov

WASHINGTON, D.C./October 24, 2014 –

On October 22, 2014, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) filed a complaint for disciplinary action with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) against James Murry, an employee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for violating the Hatch Act.

The employee, a maintenance mechanic for USACE, is currently an independent candidate in the partisan election for sheriff in Jefferson County, Arkansas. He filed his notice of candidacy in defiance of repeated advice from both USACE and OSC that the Hatch Act prohibited him from running while he is a federal employee. Moreover, he hosted a fundraiser in support of his campaign even though USACE had circulated regular notices to employees about the Hatch Act's restrictions on political activity.

The Hatch Act prohibits employees from being candidates in partisan elections – even as independent candidates – and from knowingly soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions from any person. In its complaint, OSC charged the employee with violating both of these prohibitions and asked the MSPB to order appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Hatch Act. Available penalties include suspension, removal from employment, debarment from federal service, or a civil fine.

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.