THE HATCH ACT

Permitted and Prohibited Activities for Most Federal Employees

Generally, federal employees, unless further restricted*, may actively participate in political management and political campaigns. Accordingly, these employees may engage in "political activity" on behalf of a political party or partisan political group (collectively referred to as "partisan groups") or candidate in a partisan election as long as it is not on duty or in the workplace. Political activity refers to any activity directed at the success or failure of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan election.

For more information, contact the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at (202) 254-3650 or hatchact@osc.gov.

- May be candidates in non-partisan elections.
- May register and vote as they choose.
- May assist in voter registration drives.
- May contribute money to partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections.
- May attend political fundraisers.
- May attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- May join, be active, and hold office in partisan groups.
- May sign and circulate nominating petitions.
- May campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- May make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections.
- May distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.
- May campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- May express opinions about partisan groups, candidates in partisan elections, and political issues via email or social media while not at work or using official authority.

*All career SES, ALJs, and employees identified at 5 U.S.C. § 7323(b)(2)(B)-(3)are further restricted.

- May not be candidates in partisan elections.
- May not use official authority to interfere with an election or while engaged in political activity.
- May not invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- May not knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- May not solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless both persons are members of the same federal labor or employee organization, the person solicited is not a subordinate employee, the solicitation is for a contribution to the organization's political action committee, and the solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.
- May not engage in political activity while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, or in a government vehicle. For example:
  - May not wear, display, or distribute partisan materials or items.
  - May not perform campaign-related chores.
  - May not make political contributions.
  - May not use email or social media to engage in political activity.

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