THE HATCH ACT

Permitted and Prohibited Activities
For Employees Who May Engage in Partisan Political Management and Campaigns*

- **May not** use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election. For example:
  - May not use their official titles or positions while engaged in political activity.
  - May not invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest to subordinates that they attend political events or undertake any partisan political activity.
- **May not** solicit, accept or receive a donation or contribution for a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group. For example:
  - May not host a political fundraiser.
  - May not invite others to a political fundraiser.
  - May not collect contributions or sell tickets to political fundraising functions.*
- **May not** be candidates for public office in partisan political elections.
- **May not** knowingly solicit or discourage the participation in any political activity of anyone who has business pending before their employing office.
- **May not** engage in political activity – *i.e.*, activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group – while the employee is on duty, in any federal room or building, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, or using any federally owned or leased vehicle. For example:
  - May not distribute campaign materials or items.
  - May not display campaign materials or items.
  - May not perform campaign related chores.
  - May not wear or display partisan political buttons, T-shirts, signs, or other items.
  - May not make political contributions to a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
- **May not** post a comment to a blog or a social media site that advocates for or against a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
- **May not** use any e-mail account or social media to distribute, send, or forward content that advocates for or against a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.

- **May be** candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections.
- **May** register and vote as they choose.
- **May** assist in voter registration drives.
- **May** contribute money to political campaigns, political parties, or partisan political groups.
- **May** attend political fundraising functions.
- **May** attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- **May** join and be an active member of political clubs or parties.
- **May** hold office in political clubs or parties.
- **May** sign and circulate nominating petitions.
- **May** campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- **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** volunteer to work on a partisan political campaign.
- **May** express opinions about candidates and issues. If the expression is political activity, however – *i.e.*, activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group – then the expression is not permitted while the employee is on duty, in any federal room or building, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, or using any federally owned or leased vehicle.

For further information, contact the U.S. Office of Special Counsel’s Hatch Act Unit at:

- Fax: (202) 254-3650
- Hatch Act advisory opinion requests: hatchact@osc.gov

*This list of permitted and prohibited activities does not apply to federal employees in the following agencies, divisions, or positions:
- Election Assistance Commission
- Federal Election Commission
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Defense Intelligence Agency
- National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
- National Security Agency
- National Security Council
- National Security Division (Department of Justice)
- Criminal Division (Department of Justice)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Secret Service
- Office of Criminal Investigation (Internal Revenue Service)
- Office of Investigative Programs (Customs Service)
- Office of Law Enforcement (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms)
- Merit Systems Protection Board
- U.S. Office of Special Counsel
- Career members of the Senior Executive Service
- Administrative law judges, administrative appeals judges, and contract appeals board members

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