



## 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:

Tel: (800) 85-HATCH or (800) 854-2824  
(202) 254-3650  
Fax: (202) 254-3700

Hatch Act advisory opinion requests: [hatchact@osc.gov](mailto:hatchact@osc.gov)

\* Soliciting, accepting, or receiving such donations or contributions may be done so long as the person being solicited is: 1) a member of the same federal labor organization as defined under section 7103(4) of this title or a federal employee organization which as of the date of enactment of the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 had a multicandidate political committee (as defined under section 315(a)(4) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 441a(a)(4))); 2) not a subordinate employee; and 3) the solicitation is for a contribution to the multicandidate political committee (as defined under section 315(a)(4) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 441a(a)(4))) of such federal labor organization as defined under section 7103(4) of this title or a federal employee organization which as of the date of the enactment of the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 had a multicandidate political committee (as defined under section 315(a)(4) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 441a(a)(4))).

\* 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