

Political Activity

Agency employees are encouraged to exercise their right of citizenship and to fully participate in the political process, within the limitations imposed by funding sources. (See Appendix for details on the Hatch Act). No employee shall be penalized in any way for exercising their political rights.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Political activities of Agency employees are governed by the provisions of the Federal Hatch Act. It is the policy of the Board of Directors to comply with the regulations promulgated for the guidance of agencies and their officers and employees subject to the provisions of the Hatch Act.

Due to the nature of individual rights and the constantly changing laws as well as their interpretations by courts of jurisdiction, it is not practical to define every political act an employee can or cannot engage in. Whenever there are situations which are unclear they will be referred to the Executive Director for resolution. He/she will research the issue or request an interpretative solution from the State or Federal oversight agency. A few of the common do's and don'ts are as follows:

Permitted Activities

An employee may:

1. Register and vote as they choose;
2. Openly express an opinion on political subjects and candidates while off duty;
3. Join or identify with a political party;
4. Make voluntary contributions to political parties or candidates for political office
5. Attend political meetings and rallies while off duty;
6. Display political stickers or posters on personal vehicles;
7. Engage in nonpartisan political activity which has no restrictions; and
8. Wear political badges, buttons or display other political identification materials while off duty.

Restricted Political Activities

Agency employees may not:

1. Use Agency funds or equipment to conduct voter registration;
2. Transport voters to the polls while on duty;
3. Use Agency funds or equipment in support of a political party or candidate;
4. Identify the Agency with their off-duty political activities;
5. Use the authority or influence of their position with the Agency to affect the result of an election or a nomination for public office;
6. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command or advise another employee to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a political party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes;
7. Offer anyone employment, promotion, or benefits as a reward for their political support; and
8. Be a candidate for partisan elective office.

An Agency employee may run for nonpartisan political office, however the employee must be prudent not to campaign while on duty and must abide by other prohibitions associated with partisan political activity. These include: not using Agency equipment (including telephones) and supplies in conjunction with a campaign. It is expected that if an employee runs for a nonpartisan office, such as City Council or Mayor, the employee will use good judgment and take either paid or-unpaid leave during a period of intense campaigning. Nonpartisan offices are those which do not require a party primary or nomination process.

Federal Hatch Act policies explicitly prohibit Agency employees who are paid in full or in part from federal funds from running as candidates for partisan elective office. These policies also exclude employees from taking any type of paid or unpaid leave to run for partisan elective office.

Restrictions of Lobbying with Agency Funds

Agency funds may not be used to support the following:

1. Any activity which is planned and carried out in such a manner as to disrupt the orderly conduct of business by the Congress or other legislative body. This includes, but is not limited to, any disruptive action carried on in the chambers of Congress or any other legislative body.
2. Any demonstration, rally, picketing or other form of direct action directed at the family or home of a member of a legislative body for the purpose of attempting to influence their actions as a member of that body.
3. Any campaign of advertising conducted through commercial media for the purpose of influencing the passage or defeat of legislation.
4. Any campaign of letter writing; or other mass communications, or of mass visits to individual members of Congress or state legislatures for the purpose of influencing the passage or defeat of legislation. This restriction does not prohibit informational and educational activities involving target areas and groups.

These restrictions are not meant to limit the rights of individuals to express their personal views on public issues so long as they do so in their capacity as private citizens rather than employees or representatives of the Agency.