

THE "HATCH ACT" AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

As the general election campaigns unfold, it is important that all employees understand the applicable statutory restrictions on political activity. The "Hatch Act," as amended, 5 U.S.C. §7321 (the Act), establishes general provisions governing partisan political activity for all federal employees. One of the purposes of the Act is to ensure that federal employees are free from pressure to act on their own beliefs. For more information, click on *Political Activity and the Federal Employee*, located on the right side panel of this notice.

The following are selected prohibited activities federal employees who engage in political activities must be cognizant.

A federal employee:

MAY NOT display partisan political posters in a government office or building.

MAY NOT display excessive bumper stickers on a personal vehicle for political advertisement on government property.

MAY NOT pressure subordinates to perform political chores.

MAY NOT use social media networks to suggest or ask that readers make contributions to a political party, partisan political candidate, or partisan political group.

MAY NOT wear a partisan political button or t-shirt while on duty.

MAY NOT knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency.

MAY NOT engage in political activity while on duty.

MAY NOT engage in political activity in any government office.

MAY NOT be candidates for public office in partisan elections.

MAY NOT solicit, accept or receive political contributions.

Additionally, the Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from displaying pictures of candidates for partisan public office in the federal workplace. Now that President Obama is a candidate for reelection, the Hatch Act prohibits an employee from displaying his photograph in the federal workplace, unless one of two exceptions apply. To find out more on the exceptions click on, *OSC's Latest Guidance Regarding Pictures of President Obama in the Federal Workplace Now That He is Officially a Candidate for Reelection*, posted on the right side panel.

Political campaigning using social media, e.g., e-mail, Facebook, blogs, twitter, etc. is still a concern. This type of political campaign activity can pose potential problems if the pages link to campaign sites, of which many contain a big, red "**DONATE**" button or display partisan political support. Please read the recent guidance on *Social Media and the Hatch Act*, issued by the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) (posted on the upper right side panel). Another interesting article located on the right panel is one posted by FEDManager, *Hosting Political Events For Candidates*. This article addresses hosting partisan political events at home and speaking at partisan political fundraisers. Notably, some political activity is prohibited even while off duty.

Influencing the success or failure of a political party is serious. The Office of Special Counsel and Merit Systems Protection Board have zero tolerance policies towards violations of the Act by federal employees. Penalties for violating the Act can lead to termination of employment. Located on the right side panel please click on the link to, *Hatch Act Press Releases* to find the most recent complaints filed by OSC against federal employees for violating the Act.

The Hatch Act is enforced by the Office of Special Counsel. Inquiries about the Hatch Act may be made directly to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel by telephone at (202) 254-3650 or email at hatchact@osc.gov. For ethics related questions please contact the DMA General Counsel Office. You may also contact us via e-mail at dma-ogc@dma.mil.

Thank you,

Alan

Alan G. Kaufman, General Counsel
Deputy Designated Agency Ethics Official

ADDITIONAL HATCH ACT REFERENCES:

- [Political Activity and the Federal Employee - Handbook](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL (OSC)

- [OSC's Latest Guidance Regarding Pictures of President Obama in the Federal Workplace Now That He is Officially a Candidate for Reelection](#)
- [Social Media and the Hatch Act](#)
- [Hatch Act Press Releases: OSC Files Complaint for Disciplinary Actions Against Federal Employees For Violating the Hatch Act](#)

IN THE NEWS:

- [NASA Blogger Suspended for Hatch Act Violations](#)
- [Two Federal Supervisors Disciplined For Hatch Act Violations](#)
- [Hosting Political Events for Candidates](#)
- ['Water Cooler' Political Email](#)

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