



Hatch Act Training

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Presentation Handout

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Political Activity of DoD Personnel



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

FEB 15 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Political Activities

As the 2024 primary elections commence, I want to remind all DoD personnel about the rules pertaining to participation in political activities. The Secretary and I have stressed the importance of complying with Federal law and DoD policy that address participation in the political process by DoD military and civilian personnel. As citizens, we exercise our right to vote and participate in government. As public servants, we uphold DoD's longstanding tradition of remaining apolitical as we carry out our official responsibilities. This is why DoD imposes additional rules for some personnel beyond what other Federal agencies may require. Maintaining the hard-earned trust and confidence of the American people requires us to avoid any action that could imply endorsement of a political party, political candidate or campaign by any element of the Department.

Attached is a quick guide containing the rules that apply to DoD personnel. Do not hesitate to consult with your leaders and your legal counsel if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathleen H. Hicks", is positioned below the main text of the memorandum.

Attachment:
As stated

Hatch Act & DoD Policy

What Group Are You In?

Hatch Act Restrictions

Further Restricted

Group 1

- PAS
- Non-career SES

Group 2

- Career SES
- Contract Appeals Board
- NSA
- DIA
- NGA

Less Restricted

Group 3

- DoD Civilian Employees
- Schedule C Appointments

***Military personnel further restricted by DoD Policy**

Political Activity Quick Guide

Am I...

A Less Restricted DoD Employee

All DoD civilian employees and Schedule C appointments not covered under "Further restricted"

A Further Restricted DoD Employee or Active Duty Service Member

Presidential Appointees confirmed by the Senate (PAS), Non-career members of the Senior Executive Service (SES), Career members of the SES, Contract appeals board members, or employees of the NSA, DIA, or National Geo-Spatial-Intelligence Agency

May I...



Volunteer to work on a campaign of a candidate running for partisan political office
Engage in non-partisan political activity, including issue oriented campaigns, i.e., Healthcare, tax reform, and gun control
Engage in political activity in a Federal building
Park my personal vehicle with a (one) political bumper sticker in a government parking lot
Place a campaign sign in your yard (not on a military installation)
Write a letter to an editor, in my personal capacity, that endorses a candidate running for partisan political office
Serve as an election judge for a city or county
Work or stand at the polls, for a partisan candidate, on Election Day
Make a monetary contribution to a political party or candidate
Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions
Use official equipment while engaging in political activity

 Yes

 No

Please note that this Quick Guide is not comprehensive. For complete guidance, see <https://dodsoo.org/osd/mil/ETHICS-TOPICS/Political-Activities/>

What is Political Activity?

An activity directed toward the success **or** failure of a:

- Political Party
- Candidate for Partisan Political Office, or a
- Partisan Political Group

Examples:

- Serving as a volunteer for a political party or candidate for partisan political office
- Working for a political party at the polls
- Using office e-mail to forward partisan messages
- Soliciting, accepting, or receiving contributions for a political party or candidate for partisan political office
 - Be careful what you forward on social media

What is not Political Activity?

Activity not associated with a political party

- Attendance at an issue march/rally (Middle East policies)
- Discussion of issues (abortion, immigration, gun control)
- Support to an election/referendum focused on issue-oriented campaigns (marijuana, local taxes)
- Volunteering for an election where no candidates are running with party affiliation (e.g., some school boards)
- Working at the polls for the city or county on election day

Prohibited Political Activities

- **Engaging in political activity while:**
 - On duty (in a pay status or representing the agency)
 - In a Federal building (even when off-duty)
 - Wearing a uniform or official insignia
 - Using a government vehicle

Examples of Prohibited Political Activities in the Workplace

- Displaying buttons, posters, coffee mugs, screen savers, etc., that support or oppose political parties or candidates running for partisan political office
- Sending e-mails, texts, or other social media activity that supports or opposes a political party or candidate for partisan political office
- Making online contributions to candidates
- Displaying a picture of the sitting or former President running for reelection
 - *Official photos of POTUS & VPOTUS permitted*

For further information

- SOCO Website
 - <https://dodsoco.ogc.osd.mil/ETHICS-TOPICS/Political-Activities/>
- OSC Website
 - <https://osc.gov/Services/Pages/HatchAct.aspx>
- Contact your servicing legal office
- Contact DHA OGC – Ethics Office
 - Laurie Rafferty at laurie.p.rafferty.civ@health.mil