



THE HATCH ACT

Permitted and Prohibited Activities for Most Federal Employees

Generally, federal employees, unless further restricted*, may actively participate in political management and political campaigns. Accordingly, these employees may engage in “political activity” on behalf of a political party or partisan political group (collectively referred to as “partisan groups”) or candidate in a partisan election as long as it is not on duty or in the workplace. Political activity refers to any activity directed at the success or failure of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan election.

For more information, contact the U.S. Office of Special Counsel at (202) 804-7002 or hatchact@osc.gov.

- **May** be candidates in non-partisan elections.
- **May** register and vote as they choose.
- **May** assist in voter registration drives.
- **May** contribute money to partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections.
- **May** attend political fundraisers.
- **May** attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- **May** join, be active, and hold office in partisan groups.
- **May** sign and circulate nominating petitions.
- **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** campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- **May** express opinions about political issues.
- **May** express opinions about partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections while not at work or using official authority.
- **May not** be candidates in partisan elections.
- **May not** use official authority to interfere with an election or while engaged in political activity.
- **May not** invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- **May not** knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- **May not** solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless both persons are members of the same federal labor or employee organization, the person solicited is not a subordinate employee, the solicitation is for a contribution to the organization’s political action committee, and the solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.
- **May not** engage in political activity while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, or in a government vehicle. For example:
 - **May not** wear, display, or distribute partisan materials or items.
 - **May not** perform campaign-related chores.
 - **May not** make political contributions.
 - **May not** use email or social media to engage in political activity.

*All career SES employees, ALJs, and employees identified at 5 U.S.C. § 7323(b)(2)(B)-(3) are further restricted.