



# Political Activities

The separation between political activities and the Federal Government is crucial when involving the Armed Forces because of the need for public confidence in civilian control over the military.

## WHAT IS A POLITICAL ACTIVITY?

A political activity is one directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office or a partisan political group.

## PARTISAN VS. NON PARTISAN

Partisan activities relate to candidates or to issues representing national or state political parties. Candidacy for national or state office is partisan, even if the candidate is not affiliated with a national or state political party. Partisan activities are more restricted than nonpartisan activities.

Nonpartisan activities are not associated with a national or state political party but involve “stand alone” political issues such as constitutional amendments or municipal ordinances. Members have more leeway with these activities as long as they:

- Refrain from participating in uniform;
- Refrain from using government facilities and/or resources; and
- Avoid any implication that the Air Force endorses or supports their participation.

## THE DOS AND DON'TS

### Members May:

- Register, vote, and express their opinions on political candidates and issues (but not as a representative of the Armed Forces).
- Make monetary contributions to a political organization.
- Attend partisan and non-partisan political meetings or rallies as a spectator when not in uniform.
- Promote and encourage other military members to exercise their voting rights, if such action does not attempt to influence or interfere with the outcome of an election.
- Join a political club and attend its meetings when not in uniform.
- Serve as an election official, if such service is not as a representative of a partisan political party, does not interfere with military duties, is performed while out of uniform, and has the prior approval.
- Sign a petition for specific legislative action or a petition to place a candidate's name on an official election ballot.
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing his personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign.
- Display a political sticker on your private vehicle.
- Promote a political objective or cause.

### Members May Not:

- Use official authority or influence to affect an election, solicit votes for a particular candidate/issue, or solicit political contributions.
- Be a candidate for, or hold, civil office (with few exceptions).
- Participate in partisan political management, campaigns, or conventions.
- Make campaign contributions to another member of the Armed Forces/federal government employee.
- Solicit/receive campaign contributions from another member of the Armed Forces, civilian officer, or federal employee for promoting a political cause.
- Serve in any official capacity or be listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club.
- Speak before a partisan political gathering of any kind for promoting a partisan political party/candidate.
- Participate in any radio, television, or other program as an advocate of a partisan political party/candidate.
- Perform clerical or other duties for a partisan political committee during a campaign or on Election Day.
- Solicit or fundraise in federal facilities for a partisan political cause/candidate.
- March or ride in a partisan political parade.
- Display a large political sign, banner, or poster (as distinguished from a political sticker) on a vehicle.