



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. Employees 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

Civilian Employees May:

- Be candidates for office in nonpartisan elections.
- Register and vote as they choose.
- Assist in voter registration drives, drive voters to a polling place, and act as a recorder, watcher or challenger at a polling place.
- Serve as election judge or clerk.
- Express opinions about candidates and issues.
- Display a political sign, sticker, button, etc. (*but not while on duty, in a government office, or using a government vehicle*).
- Contribute money to political organizations.
- Attend political fundraising functions.
- Join and be an active member of a political party or club, or even manage a political campaign or circulate nominating petitions.
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments and municipal ordinances.
- Campaign for/against a candidate in partisan elections.
- Make campaign speeches in partisan elections.
- Hold office in political clubs or parties, including serving as a delegate to a convention.

Civilian Employees May Not:

- Use their official authority to interfere with an election.
- Solicit, accept or receive political contributions unless both individuals are members of the same Federal labor organization or employee organization, and the one solicited is not a subordinate.
- Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the agency.
- Engage in political activity while on duty.
- Engage in political activity while in a government office or facility.
- Engage in political activity while wearing an official uniform.
- Engage in political activity while using a government vehicle.
- Become a candidate for public office in partisan elections
- Wear political buttons while on duty.
- Host or sponsor a political fundraiser (although you may attend it, and your spouse may host the fundraiser.)