

Program Year 2019 (Issued and Effective June 2020)

Background

The Hatch Act, a federal law passed in 1939, limits certain political activities of federal (or federally-funded) employees, as well as, some state, D.C., and local government employees who work in connection with federally funded programs. The law's purposes are to ensure that federal programs are administered in a non-partisan fashion, and to maintain a workforce that is free from partisan, political influence, or coercion.

Responsibility

All HCWDB staff and Career Center staff are responsible and accountable under the Hatch Act, as these positions work in connection with programs funded in whole or in part by federal funds, and **may not**:

1. Use their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the results of an election or nomination for office; or
2. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command or advise state or local officers or employees to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for partisan political purposes; or
3. Be a candidate for public office in a partisan election.



Political Activity – Any activity directed at the success or failure of a political candidate, political party, or partisan political group (collectively known as, “partisan group”).

Political Activity is **prohibited** when an employee is



On-duty



On premises that are federally funded or leased with federal dollars



While using federally funded property/equipment



24/7 Fundraising Ban

Staff may **never** solicit or accept donations for a:

- Partisan candidate,
- Political party, or
- Political organization

Personal Social Media Presence and Activity

Staff social media use is restricted by the same rules of political activity and the 24/7 fundraising ban.



Staff **cannot post political messages** while on duty, on premises that are federally funded or leased with federal dollars, or while using government property.



Staff **cannot like, share, or retweet someone's political posts** while on duty, on premises that are federally funded or leased with federal dollars, or while using government property.

If you are off duty, off federal or federally funded premises, and using your personal equipment you may



Post, like, and share political messages



List your government job/job title on your social media profile (*just make sure not to use your position to share political posts*)



Post, like, or share thoughts on broad policy issues

Example Scenario 1: *A staff member is on their lunch break on federally funded or leased property and is scrolling through their Facebook account on their personal cell phone and likes a post from a friend that is encouraging people to donate to a political candidate.*



This is a Hatch Act Violation.

Example Scenario 2: *A staff member is teleworking and takes a break to browse through Twitter and Facebook using their work laptop and retweets a message from a friend ranting about a candidate for the upcoming election and how they hope the candidate will lose.*



This is a Hatch Act Violation.

Example Scenario 3: *A staff member is at home, not working, and using their personal cell phone and sees a candidate's post about a policy topic with which the staff person agrees. However, the staff person doesn't read the entire post before liking it and misses the fundraising link at the bottom of the post.*



This is a Hatch Act Violation.



Always remember the 24/7 ban on fundraising; using your official position to influence someone to vote a certain way; and being a candidate for public office in a partisan election.

Disciplinary Action

Hatch Act violations will be dealt with according to the staff person's employer of record.

References:

[The United States Office of Special Counsel \(OSC\)](#)
[US Office of Special Counsel: Hatch Act Overview](#)