


August 27, 2014

To: All DOI Employees

From: Melinda Loftin   
Designated Agency Ethics Official

Subject: 2014 Election and the Hatch Act

The 2014 mid-term election is less than 70 days from now and Department of the Interior employees must remain aware of the Hatch Act and the restrictions it places on political activity for Federal employees. Political activity is defined as *activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, a candidate for partisan political office, or a partisan political group.*

The Departmental Ethics Office is also Interior's Hatch Act Compliance Office. We are happy to assist employees with any political activity questions you may have. Feel free to email us at [DOI\\_Ethics@sol.doi.gov](mailto:DOI_Ethics@sol.doi.gov), or call us at 202-208-7960.

For more information about the Hatch Act, visit the Departmental Ethics Office's website at <http://www.doi.gov/ethics/political-activity.cfm>.

As a general reminder, Federal employees may not:

- Use your official authority or influence to interfere with an election;
- Knowingly solicit, accept or receive political contributions;
- Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person who has business before the Department of the Interior;
- Be a candidate for public office in partisan elections;
- Wear or display political buttons while on duty or in a Government building;
- Engage in political activity while on duty;\*
- Engage in political activity in any Government office;\*
- Engage in political activity while wearing an official uniform;\*
- Engage in political activity while using a Government vehicle.\*

\*Only officials appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate may participate in these activities.

In addition, Federal employees need to be particularly mindful of the use of email and social media when participating in political activity. Here are some general rules to follow for Hatch Act and email/social media:

- You may identify your political party affiliation on your social media profile, which also contains your official title or position. This does not constitute political activity. However, you must not refer to your official title or position with the government when engaged in political activity.

- You may engage in political activity in posts on a blog, Facebook, Twitter or other social media platforms. But you may NOT do so while you are on duty or in a building where Federal employees perform official duties.
- You may not forward, retweet, “like” or “share” an email, Twitter feed, or Facebook post you receive that solicits contributions to a political party or partisan political candidate.
- You may become a “friend,” or “like” the Facebook page, or “follow” the Twitter account of a political party, partisan political group, or partisan candidate.
- However, you may not engage in activities with respect to these entities’ social media accounts in a way that constitutes political activity during duty hours or while in a building where Federal employees perform official duties.
- Supervisors may not send to subordinate employees an email that is directed at the success or failure of a political party, partisan political group, or partisan candidate.
- Since you cannot control the email you receive, being a recipient of a partisan political email while at work does not constitute prohibited political activity. However, you must not send or forward the email to others.
- You MAY send the partisan political email you received at work to your own personal email address. But you will violate the Hatch Act if you send the email to your non-government email address and then, using your non-government email address, you send the email to other people while you are on duty/at work.

Additional information and Frequently Asked Questions about political activity and Federal employees can be found at the Office of Special Counsel’s website:

<https://osc.gov/Pages/HatchAct.aspx>.