Prohibited Personnel Practices

By law, Federal employees may not:

- Discriminate
- Solicit or consider employment recommendations based on factors other than personal knowledge or records of job related abilities or characteristics
- Coerce the political activity of any person
- Deceive or willfully obstruct any person from competing for employment
- Influence any person to withdraw from job competition
- Give an unauthorized preference or advantage to improve or injure the prospects of any particular person for employment
- Engage in nepotism
- Take or threaten to take a personnel action because of whistleblowing
- Take or threaten to take a personnel action because of the exercise of a lawful appeal, complaint, or grievance right
- Discriminate based on personal conduct which does not adversely affect the performance of the employee or other employees
- Knowingly take or fail to take personnel action in the violation of veteran's preference laws
- Violate any law, rule or regulation implementing or directly concerning merit system principles
- Implement or enforce a nondisclosure agreement or policy lacking notification of whistleblower rights

More information may be obtained from:

U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
1730 M STREET, N.W., SUITE 218
WASHINGTON, DC 20036-4505
WWW.OSC.GOV

PHONE: (202) 254-3600* TOLL FREE: 1-800-872-9855*
*Hearing and Speech Disabled: Federal Relay Service 1-800-877-8339

Rev. 02/13
THE HATCH ACT

Permitted and Prohibited Activities
For Employees Who May Engage in Partisan Political Management and Campaigns*

* May not use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election. For example:
  > May not use their official titles or positions while engaged in political activity.
  > May not invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest to subordinates that they attend political events or undertake any partisan political activity.
  > May not solicit, accept or receive a donation or contribution for a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group. For example:
    > May not host a political fundraiser.
    > May not invite others to a political fundraiser.
    > May not collect contributions or sell tickets to political fundraising functions.
  > May not be candidates for public office in partisan political elections.
  > May not knowingly solicit or discourage the participation in any political activity of anyone who has business pending before their employing office.
  > May not engage in partisan political activity — i.e., activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group — while the employee is on duty, in any federal room or building, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, or using any federally owned or leased vehicle. For example:
    > May not distribute campaign materials or items.
    > May not display campaign materials or items.
    > May not perform campaign related chores.
    > May not wear or display political buttons, t-shirts, signs, or other items.
    > May not make political contributions to a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
    > May not post a comment to a blog or a social media site that advocates for or against a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
    > May not use any e-mail account or social media to distribute, send, or forward content that advocates for or against a partisan political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.
  > May be candidates for public office in nonpartisan elections.
  > May register and vote as they choose.
  > May assist in voter registration drives.
  > May contribute money to political campaigns, political parties, or partisan political groups.
  > May attend political fundraising functions.
  > May attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
  > May join and be an active member of political clubs or parties.
  > May hold office in political clubs or parties.
  > May sign and circulate nominating petitions.
  > May campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
  > 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 volunteer to work on a partisan political campaign.
  > May express opinions about candidates and issues. If the expression is political activity, however — i.e., activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group — then the expression is not permitted while the employee is on duty, in any federal room or building, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, or using any federally owned or leased vehicle.

For further information, contact the
U.S. Office of Special Counsel's Hatch Act Unit
at:
Tel: (800) 85-HATCH or (800) 854-2824
(202) 254-3650
Fax: (202) 254-3700
Hatch Act advisory opinion requests: hatchact@osc.gov

* This list of permitted and prohibited activities does not apply to federal employees in the following agencies, divisions, or positions:
  > Election Assistance Commission
  > Federal Election Commission
  > Office of the Director of National Intelligence
  > Central Intelligence Agency
  > Defense Intelligence Agency
  > National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
  > National Security Agency
  > National Security Council
  > National Security Division (Department of Justice)
  > Criminal Division (Department of Justice)
  > Federal Bureau of Investigation
  > Secret Service
  > Office of Criminal Investigation (Internal Revenue Service)
  > Office of Investigative Programs (Customs Service)
  > Office of Law Enforcement (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms)
  > Merit Systems Protection Board
  > U.S. Office of Special Counsel
  > Career members of the Senior Executive Service
  > Administrative law judges, administrative appeals judges, and contract appeals board members.

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