

Civilian Human Resources Bulletin

Volume 22 Issue 3

8 Nov 2022

Hatch Act Guidance

The Hatch Act prohibits Federal employees from engaging in political activity that advocates for, or is directed at the success or failure of a political party or candidate for partisan public office while on duty in the workplace, and/or when in a federal building, and while on duty teleworking at home. Employees who are assigned to telework from home have the same on-duty status as if they were reporting to their regular on duty work stations. Although working from home, they are still subject to the Hatch Act's on-duty restrictions.

Federal Employees may NOT:

- *Engage in political activity while on duty in the Federal workplace (including break rooms, conference rooms inside a federal building).
- *Engage in political activity while wearing a government uniform or badge, and while using a government vehicle.
- *Engage in political activity via social media (e.g., email, blog, tweet, or post) at work.
- *Engage in political activity using agency resources, e.g., government equipment such as a DoD computer or blackberry, or an official agency social media account.
- *Engage in political activity at work wearing t-shirts, hats, buttons, or displaying buttons, posters, coffee mugs, screen savers, candidate photographs, etc. that support or oppose partisan parties or candidates.

The Hatch Act prohibits Federal employees from using one's official title, position, official authority, or influence to affect the outcome of an election. The Hatch Act prohibitions applies to social media communications even if employees are using personal devices & accounts, and sending e-mails or messages through social media while on duty.

The Hatch Act prohibition applies when participating in videoconferencing, using platforms such as Skype, Teams, or Zoom. Employees participating in virtual work-related conferences are subject to the same on-duty Hatch Act restrictions as when they attend meetings or communicate in-person with others at work. Thus, for example, employees should not wear a campaign t-shirt or hat while participating in a work-related video conference call, and they should ensure that any partisan materials, like campaign signs or candidate pictures, are not visible to others during the call.

Employees using email or other conferencing programs for work purposes may not use the profile pictures associated with these platforms to show support for or opposition to a political party, partisan political group, or candidate for partisan political office. For example, employees may not use candidate images, campaign slogans, or political party symbols for profile pictures associated with official accounts or when communicating on official matters. In sum, it is important for employees to understand that although they are working from home, they are still subject to the Hatch Act's on-duty restrictions.

Additional guidance may be found at the OSC website: <https://osc.gov>