

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The rules on the political activities for NRC employees are contained in the Hatch Act and Management Directive 7.10. They apply to both full-time and part-time Federal employees, even while on leave. If you have any questions about the Hatch Act, please contact an ethics official in the Office of the General Counsel.

The Hatch Act restrictions only apply to partisan elections, that is, where candidates run on the labels of national political parties. Federal employees are free to participate fully in nonpartisan elections, which are usually for local offices, such as school boards.

NRC employees, except for members of the career Senior Executive Service (SES), can actively work in a partisan election, such as volunteering and making speeches. They still cannot run for a partisan political office (except in designated communities mainly in the Washington, D.C. area) or from soliciting political contributions from the general public. Employees cannot engage in political activity while on duty, in a Government office, while wearing a Government uniform or insignia, or while using a Government vehicle.

The following are the major partisan political activities permitted or prohibited under the current Hatch Act for all NRC employees, except career SES members:

Permitted

- Register and vote
- Assist in voter registration drives
- Contribute money to political organizations
- Express opinions about candidates and issues
- Campaign for or against candidates
- Initiate, circulate, or sign nominating petitions
- Distribute campaign literature
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances
- Join and be active in political clubs or parties (including holding office)
- Manage a campaign (including supervising volunteers)
- Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings
- Serve a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a state or national party convention
- Distribute political literature
- Stuff envelopes with campaign literature that includes an appeal for contributions
- Solicit campaign volunteers (but not from a subordinate employee)
- Serve at polling places as recorder, watcher, challenger, or similar officer or as election judge, clerk, or similar position
- Help organize fundraisers, but cannot personally solicit, accept, or receive political contributions
- Attend and speak at political fundraisers (as long as the speech does not include an appeal for contributions)

- Place a political bumper sticker on a personal vehicle and park it in a Federal building or parking lot
- Fully participate in nonpartisan campaigns, including running for office and soliciting contributions

Prohibitions

- Run for political office (except as an independent in designated localities, mainly in surrounding Washington, D.C., area)
- Solicit or collect political contributions (except in certain limited situations by Federal labor organizations)
- Engage in political activities while on official duty, on Government premises, while wearing a Government uniform or official insignia, or while using a Government vehicle
- Use official authority or influence to interfere with the result of an election
- Solicit or discourage political activities of anyone who has an application before the agency or is the subject of or participant in an ongoing audit, investigation, or enforcement action
- Wear a political button or insignia while on duty or on Government premises
- Participate in phone bank solicitations for contributions

Career SES

In addition to the prohibitions listed above, career SES members are also barred from active participation in partisan elections, such as any of the following activities:

- Hold office in a political club or party
- Manage a campaign
- Volunteer campaign work, such as distributing campaign material
- Make campaign speeches
- Register voters for one party only
- Circulate nominating petitions
- Organize or manage political meetings or rallies
- Solicit political contributions from anyone
- Serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a state or national party convention
- Work at the polls for a candidate or party, such as checker, watcher or challenger
(but can serve as election clerk, officer or similar position prescribed by state or local law)
- Drive voters to the polls as part of an organized effort by a party or candidate (but can drive voters as a gesture of good will or for a nonpolitical organization)