COMMISSIONED CORPS AND CAREER SES RESTRICTIONS

Career Senior Executive Service employees and uniformed service officers in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps are governed by equivalent standards in the 1989 HHS Standards of Conduct, Subpart F, as well as to the additional prohibitions of the Hatch Act Reform Amendments.

Subpart F—Political Activity.

§ 73.735-601 Applicability.

(a) All employees in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, including non-career employees, are subject to basic political activity restrictions in subchapter III of Chapter 73 of title 5, United States Code (the former Hatch Act) and Civil Service Rule IV. Employees are individually responsible for refraining from prohibited political activity. Ignorance of a prohibition does not excuse a violation. This subpart summarizes provisions of law and regulation concerning political activity of employees. The Federal Personnel Manual and other publications of the Office of Personnel Management contain more detailed information on this subject. These may be reviewed in Department personnel offices, or will be made available by the Ethics Counselor, or the deputy counselor for the employee's organizational component.

(b) The Secretary and Under Secretary are exempt from the prohibitions concerning active participation in political management and political campaigns. Also exempt are other officials of the Department, except the Inspector General and Deputy Inspector General, who are appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and who determine policies to be pursued by the United States in the nationwide administration of Federal laws.

(c) Intermittent employees are subject to the restrictions when in active duty status only and for the entire 24 hours of any day of actual employment.

(d) Employees on leave, on leave without pay, or on furlough even though an employee's resignation has been accepted, are subject to the restrictions. Separated employees who have received a lump-sum payment for annual leave are not subject to the restriction during the period covered by the lump-sum payment or thereafter, provided they do not return to Federal employment during the period. Employees are not permitted to take a leave of absence to work with a political candidate, committee, or organization or to become a candidate for office with the understanding that they will resign their position if nominated or elected.

(e) Employees are accountable for political activity by another person acting as their agent or under the employee's direction or control, if they are thus accomplishing indirectly what they may not lawfully do directly and openly.

(f) Though officers in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps are not subject to the restrictions in subchapter III of Chapter 73 of title 5, United States Code, the provisions of this subject apply to them.

§ 73.735-602 Permissible activities.

(a) Section 7324 of title 5, U.S.C. provides that employees have the right to vote as they please and to express their opinions on political subjects and candidates. Generally, however, employees are prohibited from taking an active part in political management or political campaigns or using official authority or influence to interfere with an election or affect its results. There are some exemptions from the restrictions of the satute:

(1) Employees may engage in political activity in connection with any question not specifically identified with a national or State political party. They also may engage in political activity in connection with an election, if none of the candidates represents a party any of whose candidates for presidential elector received votes at the last preceding election at which presidential electors were selected.

(2) An exception relates to political campaigns within, or in communities adjacent to, the District of Columbia, or in communities the majority of whose voters are employees of the Federal government. Communities to which the exception applies are specifically designated by the Office of Personnel Management. Information regarding the localities and the conditions under which the exceptions are granted may be obtained from personnel offices or the Department Counselor or deputy counselors.

(b) A covered employees is permitted to:

(1) Register and vote in any election;

(2) Express his or her opinion as an individual citizen privately and publicly on political subjects and candidates;

(3) Display a political picture, sticker, badge or button;

(4) Participate in the nonpartisan activities of a civic, community, social, labor, or professional organization, or of a similar organizations;

(5) Be a member of a political party or other political organization and participate in its activities to the extent consistent with law;

(6) Attend a political convention, rally, fund raising function; or other political gathering;

(7) Sign a political petition as an individual citizen;

(8) Make a financial contribution to a political party organization;

(9) Take an active part, as an independent candidate, or support of an independent candidate, in a partisan election in localities identified as permissible for such activities by the Office of Personnel Management;

(10) Take an active part, as a candidate or in support of a candidate, in a nonpartisan election;

(11) Be politically active in connection with a question which is not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance or any other question or issue of a similar character;

(12) Serve as an election judge or clerk, or in a similar position to perform nonpartisan duties as prescribed by State or local law; and

(13) Otherwise participate fully in public affairs, except as prohibited by law, in a manner which does not materially compromise his or her efficiency or integrity as an employee or the neutrality, efficiency, or integrity of his or her agency.

(c) The head of a principal operating component may prohibit or limit the participation of an employee or class of employees of his or her component in an activity permitted by paragraph (b) of this section, if participation in the activity would interfere with the efficient performance of official duties, or create a conflict or apparent conflict of interest.

§ 73.735-603 Prohibited activities.

(a) The following are prohibited activities:

(1) Serving as an officer of a political party, a member of a national, State or local committee of a political party, an officer or member of a committee of partisan political club, or being a candidate for any of these positions;

(2) Organizing or reorganizing a political party organization or political club;

(3) Directly or indirectly soliciting, receiving, collecting, handling, disbursing, or accounting for assessments, contributions, or other funds for a partisan political purpose or in connection with a partisan election;

(4) Organizing, selling tickets to, seeking support for, or actively participating in a fund-raising activity of, a political party or political party or political club;

(5) Taking an active part in managing the political party campaign of a candidate for public office or political office;

(6) Being a candidate for, or campaigning for, an elective public office, except as permitted in section 73.735-602(b)(9);

(7) Taking an active part in an organized solicitation of votes in support of or in opposition to a candidate for public office or political party office;

(8) Acting as recorder, watcher, challenger, or similar officer at the polls on behalf of a political party or candidate in a partisan election;

(9) Driving voters to the polls on behalf of a political party or a candidate in a partisan election;

(10) Endorsing or opposing a candidate in a partisan election in a political advertisement, a broadcast, campaign literature, or similar material;

(11) Serving as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention;

(12) Addressing a State or national convention or caucus, or a rally or similar gathering of a political party, in support of or in opposition to a candidate for public or political party office, or on a partisan political question; and

(13) Initiating or circulating a nominating petition for a candidate in a partisan election.

(b) In addition, certain political activities are prohibited by Federal criminal law:

(1) Officers and employees may not directly or indirectly solicit or receive, or be in any way involved in soliciting or receiving, any assessment, subscription or contribution for any political purpose whatever from another officer or employee. This prohibition extends to one who acts as a mere agent or messenger for the purpose of turning the contribution over to a political organization. 18 U.S.C. 602.

(2) All persons, whether employees or not, are prohibited from soliciting in any manner, or receiving a contribution of, money or a thing of value, in any room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties by any officer or employee of the United States. 18 U.S.C. 603. This prohibition extends to the sending of a letter soliciting political contributions for delivery in a Government building.

(3) No officer or employee may directly or indirectly give to any other officer, employee or person in the service of the United States, any money or other thing of value to be applied to the promotion of any political objective. 18 U.S. 607.

(4) Discrimination for giving or withholding any contribution for any political purpose and discrimination based on political influence or recommendations is prohibited.

(c) Various other laws prohibit certain activities in connection with political campaigns and elections. They include:

(1) Intimidating, threatening, or coercing voters in Federal elections (18 U.S.C. 594).

(2) Using official authority in interfering with a Federal election by a person employed in any administrative position by the United States or by any department, independent estalishment, or agency of the United States or by any State, agency, or political subdivision thereof in connection with any activity financed in whole or in part by Federal funds (18 U.S.C. 595).

(3) Promising Federal employment, compensation, or any benefit from Federal funds, in return for political activity or support (18 U.S.C. 600).

(4) Depriving anyone of employment, compensation, or any benefit derived from Federal relief or work relief funds on account of race, creed, color, or political activity (18 U.S.C. 601).

(5) Soliciting, assessing, or receiving subscriptions or contributions for political purpose from anyone on Federal relief or work relief (18 U.S.C. 604).