

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND ETHICS**

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**OVERVIEW**

**6.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter establishes policy on:

- A.** What political activities U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees may be involved with in accordance with the Hatch Act, and
- B.** The requirements regarding political activities and the use of social media and email.

**6.2 What are the legal authorities for this chapter?**

- A.** The Hatch Act ([5 U.S.C. 7321](#) et seq.).
- B.** Political Activities – Federal Employees Residing in Designated Localities ([5 CFR 733](#)) and Political Activities of Federal Employees ([5 CFR 734](#)).

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**6.3 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?**

**A. Accept (or receive)** means to come into possession of something from a person officially on behalf of a candidate, a campaign, a political party, or a partisan political group, but does not include administrative activities which precede or follow the acceptance of the item.

**B. Campaign** means all acts done by a candidate and his or her supporters to obtain a majority of the votes to be cast toward a nomination or in an election.

**C. Candidate** means a person seeking the nomination or election to any elective office whether or not the person is elected. A person is considered to be a candidate if the individual has received political contributions, made expenditures, or has consented to another person receiving contributions or making expenditures on their behalf for the person's future nomination or election.

**D. Election** includes a primary, special, runoff, or general election.

**E. (The) Hatch Act** limits certain political activities of most executive branch employees. The law's purposes are to ensure that Federal programs are administered in a nonpartisan fashion to protect Federal employees from political coercion in the workplace, and to ensure that Federal employees are advanced based on merit and not based on political affiliation. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is the agency responsible for enforcing the Hatch Act. General information and Frequently Asked Questions about the Hatch Act can be found on the [OSC Web site](#).

**F. Nonpartisan election** means:

(1) An election in which none of the candidates represents a political party that had a Presidential candidate who received electoral votes in the last Presidential election, or

(2) An election involving a question or issue that is not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance, or any question or issue of a similar character.

**G. On duty** means the time period when an employee is:

(1) In a pay status other than paid leave, compensatory time off, credit hours, time off as an incentive award, or excused or authorized absence (including leave without pay); or

(2) Representing any agency or the United States Government in an official capacity.

**H. Partisan** when used as an adjective means related to a political party.

**I. Partisan election** is an election in which any of the candidates represent a political party that had a Presidential candidate who received electoral votes in the last Presidential election.

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**J. Partisan political email** is an email that is directed at the success or failure of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race.

**K. Partisan political group** is any committee, club, or other organization which is affiliated with a political party or candidate for public office in a partisan election, is organized for a partisan purpose, or engages in partisan political activity.

**L. Political activity** is activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group.

**M. Political contribution** means any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or anything of value, made for any political purpose.

(1) A political contribution includes:

(a) Any contract, promise, or agreement, express or implied, whether or not legally enforceable, to make a contribution for any political purpose;

(b) Any payment made by someone other than a candidate or a political party or affiliated organization, to compensate an individual for personal services provided to the candidate or political party or affiliated organization; and

(c) The provision of personal services, paid or unpaid, for any political purpose. ("Personal services" in this context includes contributions with commercial value, such as pizzas from a restaurant or accounting services from a professional accountant.)

(2) A political contribution does not include the value of services provided without compensation by any individual who volunteers on behalf of any candidate, campaign, political party, or partisan political group. ("Services provided without compensation by any individual who volunteers" would include volunteer activities, such as stuffing envelopes or distributing information door-to-door.)

**N. Political party** is a national political party, a State political party, or an affiliated organization.

**O. Solicit** means to request expressly of another person that he or she contribute something to a candidate, a campaign, a political party, or partisan political group.

**P. Subordinate** refers to the relationship between two employees when one employee (the subordinate employee) is under the supervisory authority, control, or administrative direction of the other employee.

**6.4. Who is responsible for ensuring that employees comply with the laws and regulations regarding political activities and the Hatch Act?**

**A. At the Department:** The Solicitor has designated the Director of the Departmental Ethics Office as the Department's "Designated Hatch Act Compliance Officer" (HACO). The HACO is

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the lead Departmental contact for the OSC, and is responsible for developing Departmental Hatch Act policies, procedures, training, and guidance.

**B. In the Service:** See Table 6-1.

<b>Table 6-1: Service responsibilities related to political activities and the Hatch Act</b>	
<b>These employees...</b>	<b>Are responsible for...</b>
<b>(1) The Director (the Service Ethics Counselor)</b>	Administering the regulations governing the political activities of employees.
<b>(2) The Service Deputy Ethics Counselor and Associate Ethics Counselors (i.e., “servicing Ethics Counselors” for Directorate members)</b>	<p><b>(a)</b> Developing, implementing, and disseminating Service policy on political activities and the Hatch Act;</p> <p><b>(b)</b> Advising Directorate members, Assistant Ethics Counselors, and Service employees on matters related to political activities and the Hatch Act; and</p> <p><b>(c)</b> Coordinating with the HACO regarding Hatch Act advice to Service employees.</p>
<b>(3) Regional and Headquarters Assistant Ethics Counselors (i.e., “servicing Ethics Counselors” for all employees except Directorate members)</b>	<p><b>(a)</b> Advising employees other than Directorate members on matters related to political activities and the Hatch Act, and</p> <p><b>(b)</b> Consulting with the Service Deputy Ethics Counselor and Associate Ethics Counselors regarding Hatch Act advice.</p>
<b>(4) Supervisors</b>	<p><b>(a)</b> Ensuring that employees are aware of the requirements related to political activities and the Hatch Act, and</p> <p><b>(b)</b> Advising employees to contact their servicing Ethics Counselor if they have any questions about political activities or the Hatch Act.</p>
<b>(5) Employees</b>	Complying with the policy in this chapter and seeking assistance from their servicing Ethics Counselor, when necessary.

**POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ALLOWED AND NOT ALLOWED**

**6.5 What are the rules for non-career Senior Executive Service (SES), Schedule C, General Schedule (GS) Career employees (full-time, part-time, temporary, and intermittent), Wage Grade, and Special Government employees?**

**A. If you are one of the [employees listed above](#), the following rules apply to you at all times. You MAY:**

- (1) Be a candidate in nonpartisan elections.

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- (2) Register and vote as you choose.
- (3) Assist in voter registration drives.
- (4) Contribute money to partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections.
- (5) Attend political fundraisers.
- (6) Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.
- (7) Join, be active, and hold office in partisan groups.
- (8) Sign and circulate nominating petitions.
- (9) Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
- (10) Make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections.
- (11) Distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.
- (12) Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- (13) Express opinions about political issues.
- (14) Express opinions about partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections while not at work or using official authority. If the expression is a political activity, then it's not allowed while you are on duty, in any Federal room or building, using Government equipment, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, or using any federally owned or leased vehicle.

*Example 1 (serving as elected official for partisan political committee): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may hold an elected role in a partisan political club (not a position elected by voters). For example, an employee may serve as the elected Precinct Captain for the Arlington County Republican or Democratic Committee. An employee also may attend a State or national party convention, and he/she may serve as a delegate, alternate, proxy, or voting member. The employee also may serve as an officer in a political party's national committee, including serving as treasurer for a partisan political campaign or other partisan political group, if he/she does not solicit, accept, or receive political contributions from any person (or engage in any other of the Hatch Act's prohibited activities).*

*Example 2 (working on a candidate's political campaign): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may volunteer or be paid to work on a candidate's political campaign, if he/she does it on his/her own time, and does not conduct campaign work in a Federal building or using Government equipment. The employee may organize events, coordinate volunteers, canvass, manage phone banks, and write Web site material and*

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*campaign literature. He/she may hold a title (e.g., Communications Director for Candidate Smith) and list that position on a political resume to obtain a future, non-Federal job. An employee may use his/her own personal business cards for political work he/she does during personal time. However, he/she may not allow his/her name to appear on materials soliciting political contributions for the candidate, even on the letterhead of stationery used to send out solicitation letters. The employee may not host a fundraiser or otherwise fundraise for the candidate, including via email, social media, or any other means. The employee's name may not appear on a fundraiser invitation as a sponsor or point of contact. If he/she distributes campaign literature to individuals, that literature should not mention making political contributions to the campaign. Finally, the employee may not collect contributions on behalf of the campaign.*

*Example 3 (writing/publishing opinions regarding a candidate): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may write and publish op-eds, write letters to the editor, and post comments on a blog endorsing a candidate in his/her own name if he/she does so in his/her personal capacity and does not identify his/her Federal position or office. The employee may not conduct this activity while on duty or in a Federal building or vehicle or using Government equipment. Finally, anything he/she writes may not include a request for political contributions or information about where voters may contribute, even if the employee makes the endorsement anonymously.*

*Example 4 (ghostwriting materials for a candidate): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may ghostwrite fundraising letters or literature for use by a candidate under the candidate's name (not the employee's name), but not while in a Federal building, using Government equipment, or on Government time. The OSC views this as allowable as "behind-the-scenes" support for a fundraising effort.*

**B. If you are one of the [employees listed above](#), the following rules apply to you at all times, whether on duty or off duty. You MAY NOT:**

- (1)** Be a candidate in partisan elections. See section 6.9 for exceptions due to locality.
- (2)** Use official authority to interfere with an election or while engaged in political activity.
- (3)** Invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- (4)** Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- (5)** Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless:
  - (a)** You and the person you are soliciting are members of the same Federal labor or employee organization,
  - (b)** The person solicited is not a subordinate employee,

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(c) The solicitation is for a contribution to the organization's political action committee, and

(d) The solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.

(6) Engage in political activity while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, in a Government vehicle, or using Government equipment. For example, while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, or in a Government vehicle, you may not:

(a) Wear, display, or distribute partisan materials or items;

(b) Perform campaign-related chores;

(c) Make political contributions; or

(d) Use email or social media to engage in political activity (also see section 6.10).

*Example 1 (campaigning for a candidate): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may not campaign for an individual seeking election to the U.S. House of Representatives while wearing her uniform.*

*Example 2 (door-to-door canvassing for a candidate): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may not canvass door-to-door with another person or in a group of people, if anyone in the group is asking for contributions to a partisan political campaign. It is not enough for the employee to remain silent while someone else from the group solicits the contribution, because the person being solicited views the solicitation as coming from everyone in the group.*

*Example 3 (bumper sticker on personal vehicle): An employee listed in section 6.5 of this policy may place a bumper sticker on his/her personal vehicle and park it in a Federal parking lot. However, a large partisan campaign sign in the back window or on the side of the personal vehicle is not permitted.*

**6.6 What are the rules for career Senior Executive Service (SES) employees?**

**A. If you are a career SES employee, the following rules apply to you at all times. You MAY:**

(1) Be a candidate in non-partisan elections.

(2) Register and vote as you choose.

(3) Assist in non-partisan voter registration drives.

(4) Contribute money to partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections.

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- (5) Attend political rallies, meetings, and fundraisers.
- (6) Join partisan groups.
- (7) Sign nominating petitions.
- (8) Participate in campaigns where none of the candidates represent a political party.
- (9) Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or municipal ordinances.
- (10) Express opinions about political issues.
- (11) Express opinions about partisan groups and candidates in partisan elections while not at work or using official authority (not allowed while you are on duty, in any Federal building, while wearing a uniform or official insignia, using any federally owned or leased vehicle, or using Government equipment.)

**B. If you are a career SES employee, the following rules apply to you at all times, whether on duty or off duty. You MAY NOT:**

- (1) Be a candidate in a partisan election. See section 6.9 for exceptions due to locality.
- (2) Use official authority to interfere with an election or while you are engaged in political activity.
- (3) Invite subordinate employees to political events or otherwise suggest that they engage in political activity.
- (4) Knowingly solicit or discourage the political activity of any person with business before the agency.
- (5) Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions (including hosting or inviting others to political fundraisers) unless:
  - (a) You and the person that you are soliciting are members of the same Federal labor or employee organization,
  - (b) The person solicited is not a subordinate employee,
  - (c) The solicitation is for a contribution to the organization's political action committee, and
  - (d) The solicitation does not occur while on duty or in the workplace.
- (6) Engage in political activity while on duty, in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, in a Government vehicle, or using Government equipment. For example, while on duty,

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in the workplace, wearing a uniform or official insignia, in a Government vehicle, or using Government equipment, you may not:

- (a) Wear or display partisan materials or items,
  - (b) Make political contributions, or
  - (c) Use email or social media to engage in political activity (also see section 6.10).
- (7) Be active in partisan political management. For example you may not:
- (a) Hold office in partisan groups,
  - (b) Organize or manage political rallies or meetings, or
  - (c) Assist in partisan voter registration drives.
- (8) Be active in partisan political campaigns. For example you may not:
- (a) Make campaign speeches or otherwise campaign for or against candidates;
  - (b) Distribute campaign materials, including via email or social media; or
  - (c) Circulate nominating petitions.

*Example 1 (speaking at campaign event): A career SES employee is asked to speak at a campaign event for a friend who is seeking election to the U.S. Senate as a member of one of the major political parties. He is prohibited from speaking at the event. However, he may attend the event and donate funds to his friend's campaign.*

*Example 2 (non-partisan referendum fundraiser): A career SES employee wants to host a fundraiser in her home for a non-partisan referendum on school funding. She may do so. However, she should not solicit funds from subordinate employees or any person with business before the agency.*

**6.7 What are the rules for the Director?** Only Presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed (PAS) officials may participate in political activities while on duty, and then only when the costs associated with the political activity are not paid for by money derived from the Treasury of the United States. The Director is the only PAS employee in the Service.

**A. The Director MAY:**

- (1) Be a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election.
- (2) Register and vote as he/she chooses.
- (3) Express personal opinions about candidates and issues.

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(4) Contribute money to political campaigns, political parties, or partisan political groups, but he/she cannot use Government resources, equipment, or time to do so.

(5) Attend political fundraising functions.

(6) Assist in voter registration drives.

(7) Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings.

(8) Join and be an active member of political clubs or parties.

(9) Sign nominating petitions.

(10) Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, and municipal ordinances.

(11) Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.

(12) Make campaign speeches for candidates in partisan elections.

(13) Distribute campaign literature in partisan elections.

(14) Hold office in political clubs or parties, including serving as a delegate to a convention.

(15) Engage in political activity while on duty, in any Government office or vehicle, or wearing a uniform or official insignia (except he/she cannot wear a political button while on duty).

**B. The Director MAY NOT:**

(1) Be granted leave without pay to work on a political campaign.

(2) Be a candidate for public office in partisan elections unless he/she lives in one of the excepted localities (see section 6.9).

(3) Use his/her official title, authority, or influence to interfere with an election.

(4) Solicit or accept political contributions.

(5) Solicit or discourage the political activity of anyone with business before the Department.

(6) Wear political buttons while on duty or in Federal buildings.

(7) Promise or withhold Federal benefits (e.g., jobs, grants, contracts) based on political support or nonsupport.

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**(8)** Require subordinate employees to work on campaign activities or penalize them for not participating.

**6.8 Can appropriated funds be used to pay for costs related to political activity?** No, appropriated funds (i.e., money derived from the Treasury of the United States) cannot be used to pay for costs associated with political activities.

**6.9 Are there exceptions to political activity restrictions?** In certain communities where the population consists of large numbers of voters who are Federal employees, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) determined that it is in the domestic interest of employees to participate in local elections. In these approved municipalities (see Table 6-2), any Federal employee may participate in local partisan campaigns and elections as an independent, subject to the following conditions:

**A.** You must not neglect your duties.

**B.** You may not run for local office as a candidate representing a political party. You must run as an independent candidate and conduct your campaign in a purely nonpartisan fashion.

**C.** If you are elected or appointed to an elective local office requiring full-time service, you must resign your position with the Federal Government. If elected or appointed to an elective local office requiring only part-time service, you may accept and hold that office without relinquishing your Federal employment if it does not conflict or interfere with your Federal duties.

**Table 6-2: Municipalities where OPM has approved Federal employee participation in local elections as independent candidates**

<b>States</b>	<b>Municipalities</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	Anchorage
<b>Arizona</b>	Huachuca City, Sierra Vista
<b>California</b>	Benecia
<b>Georgia</b>	Centerville, Warner Robins
<b>Indiana</b>	Crane
<b>Maryland</b>	Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Berwyn Heights, Bethesda, Bladensburg, Bowie, Brentwood, Calvert County, Capitol Heights, Cheverly, Chevy Chase - section 3, Chevy Chase - section 4, Chevy Chase View, Town of Chevy Chase Village, College Park, Cottage City, District Heights, Edmonston, Fairmont Heights, Forest Heights, Frederick County, Garrett Park, Glenarden, Glen Echo, Greenbelt, Howard County, Hyattsville, Kensington, Landover Hills, Village of Martin's Additions, Montgomery County, Morningside, Mount Rainier, New Carrollton, North Beach, North Brentwood, North Chevy Chase, Northwest Park, Prince Georges County, Riverdale, Rockville, St. Mary's County, Seat Pleasant, Somerset, Takoma Park, University Park, Washington Grove
<b>Tennessee</b>	New Johnsonville
<b>Virginia</b>	Alexandria, Arlington County, Clifton, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Herndon, Loudoun County, Manassas, Manassas Park,

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**Table 6-2: Municipalities where OPM has approved Federal employee participation in local elections as independent candidates**

States	Municipalities
	Portsmouth, Prince William County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, Vienna
<b>Washington</b>	Bremerton, Elmer City, Port Orchard

**POLITICAL ACTIVITIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL**

**6.10 What are the rules regarding political activity and using social media?**

**A. Official social media:**

- (1) Do not make any political statements on official social media accounts. Limit content to official business matters and remain politically neutral.
- (2) See the [Department's Social Media Policy](#) and [Social Media Guidebook](#) for more guidance on the use of social media in an official capacity.

**B. Personal social media:** See Table 6-3 for the do's and don'ts related to personal social media and political activity.

**Table 6-3: Do's and don'ts related to political activity on personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)**

On your personal social media account, YOU MAY...	On your personal social media account, DON'T...
(1) Express your opinion about a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race (e.g., post, "like," "share," "tweet," "retweet") on your own time, with a few limitations.	(1) Don't engage in any political activity on a personal social media site while on duty or in the workplace or using Government equipment.
(2) Include your official title or position on your personal social media profile.	(2) Don't refer to your official title or position while engaged in political activity at any time.
(3) Accept an invitation to a political fundraising event.	(3) Don't suggest or ask anyone to make partisan political contributions at any time.
(4) Become a "friend," "like," or "follow" the social media page of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race, but not while on Government duty.	(4) Don't provide links to the political contribution page of any partisan group or candidate in a partisan race.
(5) Use an alias to "friend," "like," or "follow" the social media page of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race, but be advised that you are subject to the Hatch Act even when you act under an	(5) Don't click a "like," "share," or "retweet" a solicitation from a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race, including an invitation to a political fundraising event.
	(6) <u>Rule for supervisors:</u> If you are a

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**Table 6-3: Do's and don'ts related to political activity on personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)**

<b>On your personal social media account, YOU MAY...</b>	<b>On your personal social media account, DON'T...</b>
<p>alias.</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Continue to “friend,” “like,” or “follow” an official social media page of a Government official after he or she has become a candidate for reelection. For example, you may continue to “friend,” “like,” or “follow” the official social media page of the President or a Member of Congress, even after the President or Member begins a reelection campaign.</p> <p><b>(7)</b> Display a political party or campaign logo or candidate photograph as your cover or header photo on your personal social media account. This display, usually featured at the top of a social media profile, without more, is not improper political activity. (If you make your profile/cover picture a campaign logo or candidate photograph, because it accompanies most actions on social media, do not, while on duty or in the workplace, post, “share,” “tweet,” or “retweet” any items because each such action would show your support for a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race, even if the content of the action is not about those entities.)</p> <p><b>(8)</b> Complete the “political views” field in the biographical information area of your personal social media account. Simply identifying your political party affiliation on a social media profile, which also contains your official title or position, without more, is not an improper use of official authority.</p> <p><b>(9) Rule for supervisors:</b> If you are a supervisor and are “friends” with or have “followers” who are subordinate employees, you may make statements about a partisan group or candidate in a</p>	<p>supervisor and are “friends” with or have “followers” who are subordinate employees, don’t specifically direct political statements toward a subordinate employee, or to a subset of friends that includes subordinate employees. For example, you should not send to a subordinate employee a Facebook message or “tweet” that shows your support for a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race.</p> <p><b>(7) Rule for career SES employees:</b> If you are a career SES employee, don’t post or link to campaign or other partisan material of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>(a)</b> Don’t “share” these entities’ Facebook or other social media pages or their content.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>(b)</b> Don’t “retweet” posts from these entities’ Twitter accounts.</p>

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**Table 6-3: Do's and don'ts related to political activity on personal social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)**

On your personal social media account, YOU MAY...	On your personal social media account, DON'T...
partisan race on your personal social media account only if they are directed at all of your social media friends, e.g., posted on a Facebook page.	

**C. Third party messages, posts, and tweets on personal social media sites:**

(1) Although the Hatch Act prohibits Federal employees from soliciting or receiving political contributions at any time, you are not responsible for the statements of third parties, even when they appear on your social media page.

(2) If someone posts a link on your social media page to the political contribution page of a partisan group or candidate in a partisan race, or otherwise solicits political contributions, you do not have to take any action. The same advice applies to any “tweets” directed at you. However, you should not “like,” “share,” or “retweet” the solicitation, or respond in any way that would seem to encourage other readers to contribute.

**6.11 What are the rules regarding political activity using email? See Table 6-4.**

**Table 6-4: Do's and don'ts related to political activity and email**

YOU MAY...	DON'T...
(1) While on duty or in the workplace, receive a partisan political email. Simply receiving this type of email while at work, whether to a personal or Government email account, without more, does not violate the Hatch Act.	(1) Don't send or forward a partisan political email to another person from your Government email account or from your personal email account while at work (even if you're using your personal smart phone or tablet).
(2) Forward a partisan political email from your Government email account to your personal email account while at work. (Do not send it to anyone else.)	(2) Don't send or forward an email invitation to a partisan political fundraising event to others. The Hatch Act prohibits you from soliciting or receiving partisan political contributions at any time, which includes inviting individuals to partisan political fundraising events.
(3) Send or forward an email about current events or matters of public interest to others while at work or on duty. The Hatch Act does not prohibit you from engaging in non-partisan political activities. Accordingly, you may express your opinion about current events and matters of public interest at work if your actions are not considered political	(3) <u>Rule for supervisors:</u> Don't send or forward a partisan political email to subordinate employees at any time. It is an improper use of official authority for a supervisor to send or forward a partisan political email to subordinates.

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**Table 6-4: Do's and don'ts related to political activity and email**

YOU MAY...	DON'T...
activity. For example, you are free to express your views and take action as an individual citizen on such questions as referendum matters, changes in municipal ordinances, constitutional amendments, pending legislation, or other matters of public interest, like issues involving highways, schools, housing, and taxes. You must comply with the <a href="#">Department's "Limited Personal Use of Government Office Equipment Policy"</a> when sending or forwarding any non-work related emails.	

## VIOLATIONS OF THE HATCH ACT

**6.12 Where should employees report suspected violations of the Hatch Act?** Report suspected violations to your servicing [Ethics Counselor](#). The OSC and the Merit Systems Protection Board enforce the Hatch Act.

**6.13 What are the sanctions for violation of the Hatch Act?** Penalties for Hatch Act violations include removal, reduction in grade, debarment from Federal employment for a period not to exceed 5 years, suspension, reprimand, or an assessment of a civil penalty not to exceed \$1,000.

/sgd/ Thomas O. Melius  
ACTING DIRECTOR

Date: April 6, 2017