

Use Your Rights

Hatch Act Do's and Don'ts

Under the Hatch Act, there are many ways that federal employees can engage in partisan political activity and only a handful of activities to avoid.

Federal employees may:

- Register and vote as they choose
- Wear political buttons (except in government buildings, wearing a government uniform or while on duty)
- Sign petitions, including nomination petitions
- Assist in voter registration drives
- Express opinions about all candidates and issues, privately and publicly
- Display a political affiliation in their social media profile information
- Display a political party, campaign logo, or candidate picture as their profile or cover picture on their personal Facebook or Twitter account
- Run for election to a non-partisan office
- Run for office within party organizations and affiliated groups
- Attend political conventions, rallies, and meetings as an elected representative of a partisan organization
- Contribute to TEPAC or other political organizations or attend a political fundraising function
- Solicit contributions to TEPAC from another NTEU member provided that the contributor is not a subordinate employee

NOTE: Spouses and other members of an employee's family may engage in all forms of partisan political activities.

Federal employees may not:

- Be candidates for partisan public office
- Use their official position to influence election results
- Use an official social media account to engage in political activity
- Engage in political activity in government buildings or while on duty (including using government e-mail systems to distribute political messages or posting on social media)
- Collect, solicit or receive any financial contributions from the general public through written, oral, email, or social media communications

Opportunities for federal employees to join in the political process were virtually non-existent until NTEU led the effort to expand ways for federal employees to participate in the nation's civic life. The union secured significant reforms to the Hatch Act and opened up the process to federal employees.

The original statute prohibited nearly all partisan political activities for federal employees, outside of voting. NTEU-initiated reforms expanded the range of activities that federal employees can take part in to include participating in phone banks and sending endorsement mailings, as well as holding lunchtime meetings and voter registration drives.

Take advantage of your rights.