



# THE IG UPDATE



June 2024

## Guidance on Political Activities of Soldiers, Airmen and Federal Employees

While the Department of Defense encourages Soldiers, Airmen and DA Civilians to carry out their obligations of citizenship, there are several policies that provide left and right limits on participation in political activities, including DOD Directive 1344.10, AR 600-20, and the Hatch Act.

### Servicemembers may engage in the following activities:

- Register, vote, and express opinions on political candidates and issues, but not while on duty, in uniform, or by speaking on behalf of the armed forces.
- Write letters to the editor of a newspaper expressing personal views on political issues/concerns.
  - Letters cannot be part of an organized letter-writing campaign or solicitation of votes for or against a political party, partisan cause, or candidate.
  - Letters must clearly state that the views are those of the individual and not the U.S. Army/U.S. Air Force if the letter identifies the writer as a Servicemember.
  - Display a political bumper sticker on his/her private vehicle.
- Make monetary contributions to a political campaign or organization.
- Attend political meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities (only as a spectator, and never in uniform).

### Servicemembers shall not engage in the following:

- Speak before a partisan political gathering.
- Wear the uniform or use government property while participating in a political event.

### Restrictions for National Guard Servicemembers:

- National Guard Servicemembers (not on active duty) may run for political office, and include or permit the inclusion of their current or former specific duty, title, or position, or photographs in uniform, when displayed with other non-military biographical details.
- Any information about their military affiliation must also include a disclaimer that the information/photographs do not imply DOD/Army/Air Force endorsement.

### Federal Employees

- Title 32 and Title 5 Technicians:
  - While in their personal capacities, may volunteer with a political campaign or political organization (i.e., organizing rallies/meetings, making phone calls on behalf of a candidate, serving as a delegate to a party convention, and working for a political party).

- Prohibited from soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions.
- Regardless of employment status, all Federal employees are restricted from engaging in political activity while on duty or in a Federal building.

### Social Media Restrictions:

- Servicemembers must not comment, post, or link to material that violates WCMJ, UCMJ, DOD, or Army/Air regulations (e.g., showing contempt for public officials, releasing sensitive information, or posting unprofessional material prejudicial to good order and discipline or Service-discrediting).
- Soldiers on active duty may not share or re-tweet comments or tweets from the social media accounts of a political party or candidate running for partisan office.
- Civilian personnel may generally express their personal views on public issues or political candidates via social media platforms; however, if they are identified as a DOD/Army/Air employee on this platform, they must clearly and prominently state that these views are not affiliated with DOD.
- Federal civilian employees cannot send political emails or post political messages to social media while in a Federal building, even if using a personal device.
- All employees may never use Government equipment to engage in political activities.

**Perception matters!** All Servicemembers and Federal Employees must avoid perception that their political activities imply or appear to imply official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement of a political candidate, campaign, or cause. See the video below:

### 2024 Political Activities Training – Navigating the Ethical Midfield During an Election Cycle:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_rb6VTJX3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_rb6VTJX3s)

