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Political activity

As primary election day approaches and public office races heat up, we thought a reminder about the political activity and related rules would be helpful. Below are a few important points to keep in mind when advising your agency's employees and special state appointees on political activity issues.

Political activity rule (42 IAC 1-5-4) - The political activity rule prohibits state employees and special state appointees from engaging in political activity, including the solicitation of political contributions from anyone, when on duty or while acting in an official capacity for the State. This rule also prohibits state employees and special state appointees from soliciting political contributions at any time, whether on duty or not, from persons with whom their agency has a business relationship or from state employees or special state appointees they directly supervise. If a state employee or special state appointee has purchasing or procurement authority on behalf of the State, he or she would be restricted from soliciting political contributions on behalf of any candidate for public office unless the employee or special state appointee is a candidate for public office himself or herself.

Other rules in the Code of Ethics are often implicated by political activity questions - Questions on acceptable political activity also often implicate Outside Employment (42 IAC 1-5-5), Use of State Property (42 IAC 1-5-12) and Ghost Employment (42 IAC 1-5-13) considerations as well.

Common questions you may receive related to political activity:

Can I run for office? There is no ethics rule that prohibits a state employee or special state appointee from seeking or holding public office while employed by the State. Some state workers, however, are also subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal [Hatch Act](#) which places various restrictions on political activity. In addition, potential candidates should also be advised to consult the Office of the Indiana Attorney General's [Dual Office Holding Guide](#) to ensure they would not violate the law against dual office holding.

Can I vote? Yes.

Can I work the polls on Election Day? Yes, because it is a state holiday, working the polls would not be done on state time or using state materials.

Political activity (continued)

Can I attend a political rally in support of a candidate? Yes, so long as you are not doing so on state time or acting in your official capacity.

Can I solicit campaign contributions for a candidate I support?

You may solicit campaign contributions on your own time, except from those you supervise or those you know have a business relationship with your agency. You may not do so if you have purchasing authority for the State.

Can I participate in a political protest during business hours? No, this could be a violation of the ghost employment rule.

Can I make a donation to a political candidate or cause I support? Yes, so long as you do so on your own time and without the use of state property.

Save the Date: Ethics Officer Roundtable, May 19th, IN St. Library.

Ethics Training

The OIG will be launching the mandatory 2014/15 ethics training this summer. This training is mandatory for all state employees, special state appointees and state officers under 42 IAC 1-4-1. The schedule for the upcoming training is being finalized, and our office will be in contact with all Ethics Officers as the training date for your agency approaches. In the meantime, Ethics Officers should prepare updated rosters of all of their agency's special state appointees; employees are automatically enrolled but special state appointees need to be manually enrolled through our office. Please contact [Jen Cooper](#) with any questions.

Ethics Officer Roundtable

The OIG is excited to announce another Ethics Officer Roundtable and discussion event to be held on May 19th in the Indiana State Library. The main topic for this Roundtable will be changes to the Indiana Code stemming from HB 1002 that will take effect on July 1st and the impact of these changes on the ethics rules. More details to follow!

Ethics Officer Designation Forms

With the impending changes to the ethics laws and the approaching ethics training rollout, it is very important that your agency Ethics Officer Designation form is up to date. If your agency has not filed an Ethics Officer Designation form with our office designating you as Ethics Officer or needs to update a previous form, please contact our office for a copy of the designation form you can fill out and return to us.