

- * Officer members on active duty may seek, hold, and exercise the functions of a nonpartisan civil office on an independent school board that is located exclusively on a military reservation.
- * As long as the member is not serving on extended active duty, enlisted members and reserve officers may hold partisan or nonpartisan civil office if the office is held in a private capacity and does not interfere with the performance of military duties.

Participation in Nonpartisan Political Activities

A member on active duty participating in nonpartisan political activities shall not:

- * Wear a uniform or use any government property or facilities while participating
- * Engage in conduct that in any way implies that the Air Force has taken an official position on, or is otherwise involved in, the local political campaign or issue

References:

DoD Directive 1344.10, AFI 51-508



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This handout provides general information. It is not a substitute for obtaining advice from an ethics counselor on the application of the ethics laws and regulations to a specific set of facts and circumstances. Please contact us at:

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ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

"Integrity First"

ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

This pamphlet provides a brief overview of regulations for participating in political activities as a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. The separation between political activities and the federal government is particularly crucial when involving the Armed Forces because of the importance of public confidence in civilian control over the military.

Political activity is an activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or a political group.

Partisan political activity is an activity supporting or relating to candidates who represent, or issues specifically identified with, national or state political parties or associated or ancillary organizations. Candidacy for national or state office is partisan, even if the candidate is not affiliated with a national or state political party.

Nonpartisan political activity is an activity supporting or relating to candidates who do not represent, or issues not specifically identified with, national or state political parties or associated or ancillary organizations. Such issues like constitutional amendments, referendums, municipal ordinances, etc.

Active Duty (AD) is full-time duty in the active military service of the United States regardless of duration or purpose, including: full-time training duty, annual training duty, attendance at a school designated as a Service School by law or by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, or National Guard Duty.

General Guidelines

Active duty members should carry out their rights and responsibilities of United States citizenship; however, they are prohibited from engaging in certain political activities to maintain good order and discipline and to

avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of improper endorsement in political matters.

Members May:

- * Register to vote, vote, and express personal opinions on political candidates and issues but not as a representative of the Armed Forces
- * Make monetary contributions to a political organization
- * Attend partisan and nonpartisan political meetings or rallies as a spectator when not in uniform
- * Promote and encourage other military members to exercise voting rights, if such action does not use their official authority or influence or interfere with the outcome of an election
- * Join a partisan/nonpartisan political club and attend its meetings when not in uniform
- * Serve as an election official, if such service is not as a representative of a partisan political party, does not interfere with military duties, is performed when not in uniform, and receives the Secretary of the Air Force's prior approval
- * Sign a petition for specific legislative action or a petition to place a candidate's name on an official election ballot as a private citizen
- * Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or a solicitation of votes and if identified as a Service Member includes a disclaimer the views are personal
- * Display a political sticker on a private vehicle
- * Wear a political button or t-shirt when not in uniform, performing military duties or would imply official endorsement.
- * Communicate with his or her elected representatives

Members May NOT:

- * Participate in partisan political fundraising activities, rallies, conventions (including speeches) management of campaigns, or debates
- * Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election, affect the course or outcome, solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue, or solicit or require political contributions from others.
- * Be a candidate for, or hold, civil office except as authorized below
- * Make campaign contributions to another member of

the Armed Forces or an employee of the federal government

- * Solicit or receive a campaign contribution from another member of the Armed Forces, a civilian officer, or an employee of the U.S. for promoting a political objective or cause
- * Allow publication of partisan political articles signed or written by the member that solicits votes for or against a partisan political party or candidate
- * Serve in an official capacity or be listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club
- * Speak before a partisan political gathering of any kind or promote a partisan political party or candidate
- * Participate in any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate of a partisan political party or candidate
- * Conduct a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political group or distribute partisan political literature
- * Perform clerical or other duties for a partisan political committee during a campaign or on election day
- * Solicit or fundraise in federal offices, facilities, or military reservations for a partisan political cause or candidate
- * Solicit or fundraise in uniform or using official title for a partisan political cause or candidate
- * March or ride in a partisan political parade
- * Display a large political sign, banner, or poster (as distinguished from a bumper sticker) on the top or side of a private vehicle
- * Participate in any organized effort to provide voters with transportation to the polls if the effort is organized by a partisan political party or candidate
- * Sell tickets for, or otherwise actively promote, political dinners and similar fundraising events
- * Attend partisan political events as an official representative of the Armed Forces
- * Send political e-mails from government e-mail or use official title in a political e-mail

Exceptions to Prohibitions

- * Enlisted members, regardless of duty status, may seek, hold and exercise functions of a nonpartisan civil office as a notary public, local school board member, neighborhood planning commission, and similar local agency.