

# Political Activity Guidelines

## City of Philadelphia

With the May 16<sup>th</sup> primary election fast approaching, it's a good time to review the rules surrounding permissible and impermissible political activity. Supervisors should share this information with employees who are not on the City email system.

Political activity is any activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate, or partisan political group. City Charter Section 10-107 places restrictions on the political activity of City employees. The City Board of Ethics enforces and interprets these restrictions and has created a Regulation that provides helpful examples of how they apply to common situations.

The following pages provide highlights of the political activity restrictions, but all City officials and employees should thoroughly [read Regulation 8](#). Thank you for abiding by these requirements.

⇒ **The City's political activity restrictions apply differently to City Council employees. Council employees should refer to [Subpart K of Regulation 8](#) for further information.** ⇐

**NOTE:** Please refer to [Subpart H of Regulation 8](#) for additional guidelines on the use of social media for a political purpose.

Remember that the information in this document is only a summary – Board of Ethics [Regulation No. 8](#) provides greater detail on the political activity rules.

If you have questions, contact the Board of Ethics [online](#) or at 215-686-9450.

In summary, what you **CAN** do: 

1. Register and vote in any election.
2. Be a member of a political party.
3. Wear political buttons and display political signs or stickers while off duty, not in uniform, and not in any City-owned or leased property.
4. Publicly express an opinion on political matters or candidates, including letters to the editor or on the internet, as long as you do not mention your title or status as a City employee.
5. Sign a political petition, such as a nominating petition, including those that are circulated by a political party, candidate or partisan political group while off duty, not in uniform, and not in any City-owned or leased property.
6. Make contributions intended for a political purpose. (**Note:** Members of the Police Department may make political contributions to political committees that are not affiliated with a candidate, such as COPPAC.)
7. Attend political rallies, conventions, fundraisers or other political events solely as a spectator, while off duty and not in uniform. However, you can't organize or host these events.
8. Volunteer for a phone bank organized by your union *so long as* it is not coordinated with a candidate's campaign.

## In summary, what you **CANNOT** do:

### 1. Engage in political activity while:

- ⇒ On duty
- ⇒ In uniform (even if off-duty)
- ⇒ Using City resources, such as telephones, smartphones, or computers (this includes printing flyers or invitations to political events on a City printer); or,
- ⇒ In any City-owned or leased building.

### 2. Use your authority, title, or status as a City employee for any political purpose.

### 3. Directly or indirectly—in any way— be concerned with the collection, receipt, or solicitation of contributions intended for a political purpose.

### 4. Take part in the management or affairs of any political party, political campaign or partisan political group, which includes any political activity that is performed in coordination with a political party, candidate, or partisan political group, such as:

- ⇒ Volunteering for a political party, political campaign, or partisan political group;
- ⇒ Circulating or initiating nomination petitions or papers for public elective office;
- ⇒ Being a candidate for public elective office or political party office;
- ⇒ Participating in get-out-the-vote activities organized or sponsored by a political party, candidate, or partisan political group; or,
- ⇒ Any political activity performed by an appointed officer or employee using resources or materials paid for or provided by a political party, candidate, or partisan political group.