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§ 734.102 Jurisdiction.

(a) The United States Office of Special Counsel has exclusive authority to investigate allegations of political activity prohibited by the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993, as implemented by 5 CFR part 734, prosecute alleged violations before the United States Merit Systems Protection Board, and render advisory opinions concerning the applicability of 5 CFR part 734 to the political activity of Federal employees and employees of the District of Columbia government. (5 U.S.C. 1212 and 1216. Advice concerning the Hatch Act Reform Amendments may be requested from the Office of Special Counsel:

(1) By letter addressed to the Office of Special Counsel at 1730 M Street NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036, or

(2) By telephone on (202) 653–7188, or (1–800) 854–2824.

(b) The Merit Systems Protection Board has exclusive authority to determine whether a violation of the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993, as implemented by 5 CFR part 734, has occurred and to impose a minimum penalty of suspension for 30 days and a maximum penalty of removal for violation of the political activity restrictions regulated by this part. (5 U.S.C. 1204 and 7326).

(c) The Office of Personnel Management is authorized to issue regulations describing the political activities which are permitted and prohibited under the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993. (5 U.S.C. 1103, 1104, 7325; Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1978, 92 Stat. 3783, 3 CFR 1978 Comp. p. 323; and E.O. 12107, 3 CFR 1978 Comp. p. 264.)

[59 FR 48769, Sept. 23, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

§ 734.103 Multicandidate political committees of Federal labor organizations and Federal employee organizations.

(a) In order to qualify under this part, each multicandidate political committee of a Federal labor organization must provide to the Office the following:

(1) Information verifying that the multicandidate political committee is a multicandidate political committee as defined by 2 U.S.C. 441a(a)(4);

(2) Information identifying the Federal labor organization to which the multicandidate political committee is connected; and

(3) Information that identifies the Federal labor organization as a labor organization defined at 5 U.S.C. 7103(4).

(b) In order to qualify under this part, each multicandidate political committee of a Federal employee organization must provide to the Office the following:

(1) Information verifying that the multicandidate political committee is a multicandidate political committee as defined in 2 U.S.C. 441a(a)(4);

(2) Information identifying the Federal employee organization to which the multicandidate political committee is connected; and

(3) Information indicating that the multicandidate political committee was in existence as of October 6, 1993.

§ 734.104 Restriction of political activity.

No further proscriptions or restrictions may be imposed upon employees covered under this regulation except:

(a) Employees who are appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate;

(b) Employees who are appointed by the President;

(c) Non-career senior executive service members;

(d) Schedule C employees, 5 CFR 213.3301, 213.3302; and

(e) Any other employees who serve at the pleasure of the President.

Subpart B—Permitted Activities

§ 734.201 Exclusion from coverage.

This subpart does not apply to employees in the agencies and positions described in subpart D of this part.

§ 734.202 Permitted activities.

Employees may take an active part in political activities, including political management and political campaigns, to the extent not expressly prohibited by law and this part.

§ 734.203 Participation in nonpartisan activities.

An employee may:

(a) Express his or her opinion privately and publicly on political subjects;

(b) Be politically active in connection with a question which is not specifically identified with a political party, such as a constitutional amendment, referendum, approval of a municipal ordinance or any other question or issue of a similar character;

(c) Participate in the nonpartisan activities of a civic, community, social, labor, or professional organization, or of a similar organization; and

(d) Participate fully in public affairs, except as prohibited by other Federal law, in a manner which does not compromise his or her efficiency or integrity as an employee or the neutrality, efficiency, or integrity of the agency or instrumentality of the United States Government or the District of Columbia Government in which he or she is employed.

Example 1: An employee may participate, including holding office, in any nonpartisan group. Such participation may include fundraising as long as the fundraising is not in any way connected with any partisan political issue, group, or candidate, and as long as the fundraising complies with part 2635 of this title as well as any other directives that may apply, *e.g.*, the Federal Property Management Regulations in 41 CFR chapter 101.

Example 2: An employee, individually or collectively with other employees, may petition or provide information to Congress as provided in 5 U.S.C. 7211.

[59 FR 48769, Sept. 23, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

§ 734.204 Participation in political organizations.

An employee may:

(a) Be a member of a political party or other political group and participate in its activities;

(b) Serve as an officer of a political party or other political group, a member of a national, State, or local committee of a political party, an officer or member of a committee of a political group, or be a candidate for any of these positions;

(c) Attend and participate fully in the business of nominating caucuses of political parties;

(d) Organize or reorganize a political party organization or political group; and

(e) Participate in a political convention, rally, or other political gathering.

(f) Serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.

Example 1: An employee of the Department of Education may serve as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a State or national party convention.

Example 2: A noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service, or other employee covered under this subpart, may serve as a vice-president of a political action committee, as long as the duties of the office do not involve personal solicitation, acceptance, or receipt of political contributions. Ministerial activities which precede or follow the official acceptance and receipt, such as handling, disbursing, or accounting for contributions are not covered under the definitions of *accept* and *receive* in § 734.101. Sections 734.208 and 734.303 describe in detail permitted and prohibited activities which are related to fundraising.

Example 3: An employee of the Federal Communications Commission may make motions or place a name in nomination at a nominating caucus.

Example 4: An employee of the Department of the Interior may serve as an officer of a candidate's campaign committee as long as he does not personally solicit, accept, or receive political contributions. Sections 734.208 and 734.303 of this part describe in detail permitted and prohibited activities which are related to fundraising.

[59 FR 48769, Sept. 23, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

§ 734.205 Participation in political campaigns.

Subject to the prohibitions in § 734.306, an employee may:

(a) Display pictures, signs, stickers, badges, or buttons associated with political parties, candidates for partisan political office, or partisan political groups, as long as these items are displayed in accordance with the provisions of § 734.306 of subpart C of this part;

(b) Initiate or circulate a nominating petition for a candidate for partisan political office;

(c) Canvass for votes in support of or in opposition to a partisan political candidate or a candidate for political party office;

(d) Endorse or oppose a partisan political candidate or a candidate for political party office in a political advertisement, broadcast, campaign literature, or similar material;

(e) Address a convention, caucus, rally, or similar gathering of a political party or political group in support of or in opposition to a partisan political candidate or a candidate for political party office; and

(f) Take an active part in managing the political campaign of a partisan political candidate or a candidate for political party office.

Example 1: An employee of the Environmental Protection Agency may broadcast endorsements for a partisan political candidate via a public address system attached to his or her private automobile.

Example 2: An employee of the Department of Interior may canvass voters by telephone on behalf of a political party or partisan political candidate.

Example 3: An employee of the Department of Agriculture may stand outside of polling places on election day and hand out brochures on behalf of a partisan political candidate or political party.

Example 4: An employee may appear in a television or radio broadcast which endorses a partisan political candidate and is sponsored by the candidate's campaign committee, a political party, or a partisan political group.

Example 5: An independent contractor is not covered by this part and may display a political button while performing the duties for which he or she is contracted.

Example 6: An employee of the Department of Commerce who is on official travel may take annual leave in the morning to give an address at a breakfast for a candidate for partisan political office.

Example 7: An employee may manage the political campaign of a candidate for public office including supervising paid and unpaid campaign workers.

Example 8: While not on duty, a Federal employee may distribute campaign leaflets by hand to homes or parked cars even though the leaflet may contain information concerning where to send contributions among other factual material about a partisan political candidate. However, should a member of the public stop the employee and request further information about contributions, the employee should refer that request to another campaign worker who is not a Federal employee.

Example 9: An employee may place in his or her front yard a sign or banner supporting a partisan political candidate.

[59 FR 48769, Sept. 23, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

§ 734.206 Participation in elections.

An employee may:

(a) Register and vote in any election;

(b) Act as recorder, watcher, challenger, or similar officer at polling places;

(c) Serve as an election judge or clerk, or in a similar position; and

(d) Drive voters to polling places for a partisan political candidate, partisan political group, or political party.

Example: An employee may drive voters to polling places in a privately owned vehicle, but not in a Government-owned or leased vehicle.

§ 734.207 Candidacy for public office.

An employee may:

(a) Run as an independent candidate in a partisan election covered by 5 CFR part 733; and

(b) Run as a candidate in a nonpartisan election.

Example 1: An employee who is a candidate for public office in a nonpartisan election is not barred by the Hatch Act from soliciting, accepting, or receiving political contributions for his or her own campaign; however, such solicitation, acceptance, or receipt must comply with part 2635 of this title as well as any other directives that may apply, *e.g.*, The Federal Property Management Regulations in 41 CFR chapter 101.

§ 734.208 Participation in fundraising.

(a) An employee may make a political contribution to a political party, political group, campaign committee of a candidate for public office in a partisan election and multicandidate political committee of a Federal labor or Federal employee organization.

(b) Subject to the prohibitions stated in section 734.303, an employee may—

(1) Attend a political fundraiser;

(2) Accept and receive political contributions in a partisan election described in 5 CFR part 733;

(3) Solicit, accept, or receive uncompensated volunteer services from any individual; and

(4) Solicit, accept, or receive political contributions, as long as:

(i) The person who is solicited for a political contribution belongs to the same Federal labor organization, or Federal employee organization, as the employee who solicits, accepts, or receives the contribution;

(ii) The person who is solicited for a political contribution is not a subordinate employee; and

(iii) The request is for a contribution to the multicandidate political committee of a Federal labor organization or to the multicandidate political committee of a Federal employee organization in existence on October 6, 1993.

(c) Subject to the provisions of § 734.306, an employee may make a financial contribution to a political action committee through a voluntary allotment made under § 550.311(b) of this chapter, if the head of the employee's agency permits agency employees to make such allotments to political action committees.

(d) An employee who is covered under this subpart and is a payroll official in an agency where employees are permitted to make allotments to political action committees may process the completed direct deposit forms for voluntary allotments which have been made to such committees under section 550.311(b) of this title.

Example 1: An GS–12 employee of the Department of Treasury who belongs to the same Federal employee organization as a GS–5 employee of the Department of Treasury may solicit a contribution for the multicandidate political committee when she is not on duty as long as the GS–5 employee is not under the supervisory authority of the GS–12 employee.

Example 2: An employee of the National Park Service may give a speech or keynote address at a political fundraiser when he is not on duty, as long as the employee does not solicit political contributions, as prohibited in § 734.303(b) of this part.

Example 3: An employee's name may appear on an invitation to a political fundraiser as a guest speaker as long as the reference in no way suggests that the employee solicits or encourages contributions, as prohibited in § 734.303 of this part and described in example 2 thereunder. However, the employee's official title may not appear on invitations to any political fundraiser, except that an employee who is ordinarily addressed using a general term of address, such as ''The Honorable,'' may use or permit the use of that term of address for such purposes.

Example 4: When an employee of the Department of Transportation is not on duty, he or she may engage in activities which do not require personal solicitations of contributions, such as organizing mail or phone solicitations for political contributions. Activities such as stuffing envelopes with requests for political contributions also are permitted. However, he or she may not sign the solicitation letter unless the solicitation is for the contribution of uncompensated volunteer services of individuals who are not subordinate employees. An employee may not knowingly send to his or her subordinate employees a letter soliciting the contribution of their uncompensated services. However, he or she may sign a letter that solicits contributions of uncompensated volunteer services as part of a general mass mailing that might reach a subordinate employee, as long as the mass mailing is not specifically targeted to his or her subordinate employees.

Example 5: An employee who is not on duty may participate in a phone bank soliciting the uncompensated services of individuals. However, an employee may not make phone solicitations for political contributions even anonymously.

Example 6: An employee of the Department of Agriculture who is on official travel and is not in a pay status nor officially representing the Department may write invitations in his hotel room to a meet-the-candidate reception which he plans to hold in his home.

Example 7: An employee may serve as an officer or chairperson of a political fundraising organization or committee as long as he or she does not personally solicit, accept, or receive political contributions. For example, the employee may organize or manage fundraising activities as long as he or she does not violate the above prohibition.

Example 8: The head of a cabinet-level department may contribute one of her worn-out cowboy boots to the campaign committee of a Senatorial candidate to be auctioned off in a fundraising raffle for the benefit of the candidate's campaign.

Example 9: An employee may help organize a fundraiser including supplying names for the invitation list as long as he or she does not personally solicit, accept, or receive contributions.

Example 10 An employee on travel may engage in political activity when he or she is not on duty without taking annual leave.

Example 11: A Federal employee may solicit, accept, or receive the uncompensated volunteer services of any individual, except a subordinate employee, to work on behalf of a partisan political candidate or organization. However, such solicitation, acceptance, or receipt must comply with part 2635 of this title as well as any other directives that may apply, *e.g.,* the Federal Property Management Regulations in 41 CFR chapter 101.

Further, Federal employees are subject to criminal anti-coercion provisions found at 18 U.S.C. 610.

Example 12: An employee who desires to make a financial contribution to a political action committee through a voluntary allotment personally may obtain blank direct deposit forms from his or her payroll office. However, he or she may not complete the form while he or she is on duty, on Federal property, or in a Federally owned or leased vehicle. Moreover, he or she may not personally deliver his or her completed form, or the completed form of another employee, to the payroll office. However, the employee may mail his or her direct deposit form to his or her agency payroll office.

Example 13: Employees who are permitted to solicit, accept, or receive political contributions under the circumstances described in §734.208(b)(4) may not solicit, accept, or receive such contributions either while they are on duty, or while they are on Federal premises, or both.

[59 FR 48769, Sept. 23, 1994, as amended at 61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

Sbupart C—Prohibited Activities

§734.301 Exclusion from coverage.

This subpart does not apply to employees in the agencies and positions described in subpart D of this part.

§734.302 Use of official authority; prohibition.

(a) An employee may not use his or her official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election.

(b) Activities prohibited by paragraph (a) of this section include, but are not limited to:

(1) Using his or her official title while participating in political activity;

(2) Using his or her authority to coerce any person to participate in political activity; and

(3) Soliciting, accepting, or receiving uncompensated individual volunteer services from a subordinate for any political purpose.

Example 1: An employee who signs a letter seeking uncompensated volunteer services from individuals may not identify himself or herself by using his or her official title. However, the employee may use a general form of address, such as ''The Honorable.''

Example 2: A noncareer member of the Senior Executive Service, or another employee covered by this subpart, may not ask his or her subordinate employees to provide uncompensated individual volunteer services for a political party, partisan political group, or candidate for partisan political office. Moreover, he or she may not accept or receive such services from a subordinate employee who offers to donate them.

Example 3: An employee may not require any person to contribute to a partisan political campaign in order to win a Federal contract:

[61 FR 35100, July 5, 1996]

§734.303 Fundraising.

An employee may not knowingly:

(a) Personally solicit, accept or receive a political contribution from another person, except under the circumstances specified in §734.208(b);

(b) Personally solicit political contributions in a speech or keynote address given at a fundraiser;

(c) Allow his or her official title to be used in connection with fundraising activities; or

(d) Solicit, accept, or receive uncompensated volunteer services from an individual who is a subordinate.

Example 1: An employee may not host a fundraiser at his or her home. However, a spouse who is not covered under this part may host such a fundraiser and the employee may attend. The employee may not personally solicit contributions to the fundraiser. Moreover, the employee may not accept, or receive political contributions, except under the circumstances stated in §734.208(b).

Example 2: An employee's name may not appear on an invitation to a fundraiser as a sponsor of the fundraiser, or as a point of contact for the fundraiser.

Example 3: An employee may not ask a subordinate employee to volunteer on behalf of a partisan political campaign.

Example 4: An employee may not call the personnel office of a business or corporation and request that the corporation or business provide volunteers or services for a campaign. However, an employee may call an individual who works for a business or corporation and request that specific individual's services for a campaign.

§734.304 Candidacy for public office.

An employee may not run for the nomination or as a candidate for election to partisan political office, except as specified in §734.207.