

## Administrative Policy No. 18.68

**Subject:** Employee Participation in Political Activities

**Information Contact:** Human Resources Division

**Authorizing Sources:** [Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. & 1505-1508](#)  
[RCW 41.06.250](#) – Political Activities  
[RCW 42.17.130](#) – Use of Public Office or Facilities  
[RCW 42.52.180](#) – Use of Public Resources for Political Campaigns

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2005

**Revised:** July 9, 2021

**Approved By:** Original signed by Wendy Long  
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

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### Purpose:

This policy establishes guidelines for all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) employees' participation in political activities. DSHS employees are subject to state laws and rules that restrict political activities.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all DSHS employees and includes coverage under the Federal Hatch Act.

### Additional Guidance:

Administrative policy [15.15 use of electronic messaging systems and the internet](#)

### Definition:

*Hatch Act:* Federal law restricting political activities of certain federal, state, and local employees whose duties involve programs financed in whole or in part by a federal loan or grant.

*Non-partisan:* Not influenced by, being in support of, or associated with the policies or interests of a specific political party.

*Partisan:* To be influenced by, in support of, or associated with the policies or interests of a specific political party.

**Policy:**

- A.** Employees, on their own time and when not serving in an official capacity or meeting the public representing the department may:
1. Express their opinions on political subjects and candidates;
  2. Campaign for or against a political candidate, constitutional amendments, referendums, initiatives, or ballot initiatives;
  3. Make a personal campaign contribution to support or oppose a political candidate or ballot initiative;
  4. Wear political campaign badges and buttons;
  5. Be a candidate for a nonpartisan elective office;
  6. Be a candidate for a partisan elective office under the guidelines of Section C of this policy.
- B.** Employees must not:
1. Use, or perceive to use, their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the results of an election or nomination for office.
  2. Use their position as a public employee to coerce, command, or advise another state employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.
  3. Use state facilities for political activity, including the use of public money, equipment, time, materials, and supplies for any political purposes, or to assist a candidate for a partisan or nonpartisan office.
  4. Hold a public office in a political subdivision of the state when holding such an office is incompatible or substantially interferes with performing official state duties.
  5. Engage in campaign activities on work time.

6. Lobby on work time for or against legislation for personal or professional interest, unless appropriate under [Administrative Policy 1.01](#).
7. Display campaign materials of any kind such as, but not limited to, signs, brochures, petitions, or articles of clothing in their office or work area.

**C. All DSHS employees are subject to Federal Hatch Act restrictions**

1. Prior to filing as a candidate with the Secretary of State or county elections department, an employee wishing to be a partisan candidate, must:
  - a. Notify the appointing authority of candidacy or intent to run for a partisan election.
  - b. Ensure that their salary is not completely funded by federal loans or grants.
  - c. Be aware of DSHS policies regarding standards of ethical conduct and use of state resources.
  - d. Understand Hatch Act restrictions from engaging in political misconduct.
2. If a supervisor or appointing authority becomes aware that an employee has filed for a partisan office and has failed to notify DSHS of their candidacy:
  - a. The appointing authority must notify DSHS human resources division.
  - b. The DSHS human resources division will notify the Federal Office of Special Counsel (OSC) if employee's position is 100% federally funded.
    - i. If OSC determines there has been a violation of the Federal Hatch Act, OSC may prosecute the employee before the Federal Merit System Protection Board (MSPB).
    - ii. Prosecution may occur even if the employee withdraws from candidacy.
  - c. If the MSPB finds the employee's violation warrants dismissal from employment, DSHS will separate the employee. Failure to do so will result in DSHS forfeiting a portion of the federal assistance equal to two years of the employee's salary.