

Policy:

All DSS employees shall comply with political activity restrictions of state law (Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 5-266a through 5-268; Conn. Agencies Regs. §§ 5-266a-1, 5-266c-1, and 5-240-5a) and the federal Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501 through 1508; 5 C.F.R. §151.101 through 151.122). *See also* [DAS General Letter 214-D](#) and [OPM General Notice 2014-13](#) (summarizing political restrictions).

Definitions:

Partisan means related to a state or national political party, i.e., Democrat or Republican.

Partisan election means an election, whether primary, general, or special, where any of the candidates is nominated or elected as representing a political party, i.e., Democrat or Republican.

Nonpartisan election means an election where none of the candidates runs in affiliation with a political party, i.e., Democrat or Republican.

Political activity means any activity that is directed toward the success or failure of a candidate in a partisan election, a political party, or a partisan political group.

Political party means a national political party, state political party, or an affiliated organization.

Application of Policy:

DSS employees retain the right to vote as they choose, express opinions on political subjects and candidates, and participate actively in political management and campaigns. When employees choose to participate in the political process, however, they must abide by the political activity restrictions for public employees found in both state and federal law. All employees are expected to familiarize themselves with the rules, which are summarized below.

I. Political Activity

Please note that the restrictions outlined in this subsection only apply to *partisan* political activity. Employees may participate fully in nonpartisan elections and political issues not specifically connected to a national or state political party, such as ballot referenda, constitutional amendments, and municipal ordinances.

In general, employees may not:

- Engage in partisan political activity while on duty;  
*Examples of activity covered under this prohibition include, but are not limited to, the following when done on work time:*
  - Campaigning for a partisan candidate;
  - Fundraising for a partisan candidate or political party;

- *Posting or displaying partisan political signs, buttons, posters, or other paraphernalia in your workspace, i.e., a campaign sign; and*
- *Collecting signatures for a nominating petition.*

*Note that this prohibition covers both activity that supports and opposes partisan candidates, political parties, or partisan political groups.*

- Use state funds, supplies, vehicles, or facilities to support or oppose a candidate, party, or issue;  
*Examples of activity covered under this prohibition include, but are not limited to:*
  - *Using DSS copying equipment and paper to print fliers for a political party;*
  - *Hosting a candidate meet-and-greet in a DSS break room; and*
  - *Placing a bumper sticker for a partisan candidate on a state vehicle.*

*Note that this restriction is not limited to when you are on duty; it applies at all times.*

- Use their position to influence, directly or indirectly, any part of the political process, including the results of an election or a nomination for office and any payments, contributions, or loans to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes; or  
*Examples of activity covered under this prohibition include, but are not limited to:*
  - *Endorsing a candidate in your official capacity;*
  - *Sending a political fundraising letter on DSS letterhead; and*
  - *Suggesting that a client or vendor support a particular candidate or party;*

*Note that this restriction is not limited to when you are on duty; it applies at all times.*

- Directly or indirectly coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to contribute anything of value to a party or person for political purposes.  
*Examples of activity covered under this prohibition include, but are not limited to:*
  - *Suggesting that a subordinate donate to a political party or candidate;*
  - *Directing a subordinate to volunteer time at a campaign event; and*
  - *Inviting a subordinate to a political fundraiser.*

*Note that this restriction is not limited to when you are on duty; it applies at all times.*

## II. Candidacy

Most employees may be candidates for political office as long as no activity related to the candidacy is done on state time or with state equipment or resources. However, certain restrictions apply.

a. *State elective office*

Employees are prohibited from being employed by two branches of state government simultaneously. Therefore, any employee who accepts a state elective office must resign from his or her position with DSS. Any employee who is a candidate for state elective office must notify the DSS Ethics Liaison in writing within 30 days after nomination for that office.

b. *Municipal elective office*

Employees are prohibited from holding certain municipal offices, whether full- or part-time, if a conflict of interest would exist between the elective office and their DSS position. In general, an employee cannot serve in elective municipal office if, in his or her position at DSS, the employee has discretionary power over that municipal office or the municipality, particularly where funding, grants, and subsidies are concerned.

An employee who accepts a full-time elective municipal office is allowed a personal leave of absence without pay from his or her DSS position for a limited time. Any employee who is a candidate for full-time municipal office must notify the DSS Ethics Liaison in writing within 30 days after nomination for that office.

c. *The Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508)*

In addition to state law restrictions on candidacy, employees whose jobs are fully federally funded are prohibited under a federal law known as the Hatch Act from being candidates in partisan elections, meaning elections where any candidate runs in affiliation with a political party. If you are considering candidacy and have questions about whether the Hatch Act applies, please contact the DSS Ethics Liaison for further guidance.

Consequences of Failure to Comply:

An employee may be subject criminal prosecution for violating the state's political activity restrictions. Criminal penalties include a fine of not more than \$1,000 and imprisonment for not more than one year. Additionally, an employee may be dismissed from state service or, if the violation does not warrant removal, suspended for not less thirty days and not more than six months.

For violations of the Hatch Act, DSS may be subject to withholding of federal funding equivalent to two years' worth of the employee's salary. DSS may take any action necessary to avoid withholding of funding, including but not limited to altering the employee's job duties such that he or she is no longer employed in a fully federally funded position.

For Further Guidance:

For questions about political activity restrictions, please contact DSS Ethics Liaison Corinne Seibert at [corinne.seibert@ct.gov](mailto:corinne.seibert@ct.gov), (860) 424-5088, or in Central Office Room 11043.