

Remember the Hatch Act – not quite as memorable as the Alamo but it is important! You received the guidance from HQ a month ago; you’ve taken the standards of conduct training; but with the elections less than a month away, I need to remind you again. We’ve had a couple of incidents in the past few weeks where some folks may have forgotten that in every election campaign, there are at least two sides and we are not supposed to campaign for – or against – any particular side while at work. The Hatch Act has serious consequences for employees who violate it. So, here is a brief reminder.

The Hatch Act RESTRICTS a federal employee’s partisan political activities. It DOES NOT eliminate partisan political activities, but it does impose some limits. You may campaign for a candidate when not at work; you can run for office in a non-partisan election, but you can’t run in a partisan election. You cannot engage in political activity while on duty, in a government office, wearing an official uniform, or using a government vehicle. **Remember: Wearing your badge is considered being “in uniform.”** While you can’t place a political bumper sticker on a government vehicle, you can certainly place one on your personal vehicle and park it in the government parking lot.

Unlike the past, employees can engage in partisan activities and the restrictions are generally limited to the federal workplace or while on official duty. Political activity “no-noes” still include such things as:

- wearing partisan political buttons on duty;
- distributing campaign information from your DOE office;
- displaying partisan political materials in a federal building; and
- soliciting campaign contributions. (Even off-duty, raising money for a political campaign can be tricky so visit your ethics advisor if you have questions.)

If you have questions, call, come by or email an ORO ethics advisor: Wendy Bryant, Mary Copeland, Dationa Carter, or Kris Muse. We will help answer your questions. You can also visit the Office of Special Counsel website for information on Hatch Act requirements, www.osc.gov