



AIR FORCE PERSONNEL POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

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POLITICALLY NEUTRAL MILITARY

As Americans, Air Force members are expected and encouraged to carry out their responsibilities as citizens. While they are permitted to participate in the political process, there are restrictions on engaging in partisan political activities. Guidelines set forth what members can and cannot do in supporting political candidates and issues.

Permissible Activities

A member of the Armed Forces on active duty may:

- Register, vote, and express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues.
- Promote and encourage others to exercise their voting franchise, if such promotion does not constitute use of their official authority or influence to interfere with the outcome of any election.
- Join partisan/nonpartisan political club, attending meetings when out of uniform.
- Serve as an election official, if such service is not as a representative of a partisan political party, does not interfere with the performance of military duties, is performed when not in uniform, and the Secretary concerned has given prior approval.
- Sign a petition for a specific legislative action or a petition to place a candidate's name on an official election ballot, if the signing does not obligate the member to engage in partisan political activity and is done as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Armed Forces.
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing the member's personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or a solicitation of votes for or against a political party or partisan political cause or candidate. If the letter identifies the member as on active duty the letter should clearly state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not those of the Department of Defense.
- Make monetary contributions to political organization, party, or committee favoring particular candidate/slate of candidates, subject to other applicable law.
- Display a political bumper sticker on the member's private vehicle.
- Attend partisan/nonpartisan political fundraising activities, meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities as a spectator when not in uniform and when no inference/appearance of official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement is drawn.
- Participate fully in the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

Prohibited Activities

A member of the Armed Forces on active duty shall not:

- Participate in partisan political fundraising activities rallies, conventions, management of campaigns, or debates, either on one's own behalf or on that of another, without respect to uniform or inference or appearance of official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement.

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- Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election, affect the course or outcome of an election, solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue, or require or solicit political contributions from others.
- Allow or cause to be published partisan political articles, letters, or endorsements signed or written by the member that solicits votes for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Serve in any official capacity with or be listed as a sponsor of partisan political club.
- Speak before a partisan political gathering, including any gathering that promotes a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Participate in any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Conduct a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political club or group or distribute partisan political literature.
- Perform clerical or other duties for a partisan political committee or candidate during a campaign, on an election day, or after an election during the process of closing out a campaign.
- Solicit or otherwise engage in fundraising activities in Federal offices or facilities.
- March or ride in a partisan political parade
- Display a large political sign, banner, or poster on a private vehicle.
- Display a partisan political sign, poster, banner, or similar device visible to the public at one's residence on a military installation.
- Participate in any organized effort to provide voters with transportation to the polls if the effort is organized by or associated with a partisan political party, cause, or candidate.
- Sell tickets for or otherwise actively promote partisan political dinners and similar fundraising events.
- Attend partisan political events as an official representative of the Armed Forces.
- Make a campaign contribution to, or receive or solicit a campaign contribution from, any other member of the Armed Forces on active duty.
- Commissioned officers shall not use contemptuous words.

Common Sense

Activities not expressly prohibited may be contrary to the spirit and intent of the Air Force. Any activity that may be reasonably viewed as directly or indirectly associating the Department of Defense or the Department of Homeland or any component of these Departments with a partisan political activity or is otherwise contrary to the spirit and intention of this Directive shall be avoided, so use your common sense.

For more information see:
AFI 51-902 & DODD 1344.10