

Department of Finance and Administration Office of Personnel Management

Policy Title: **Political Activity**

Policy Number: **18**

Authority: **Ark. Code Ann. §§ 7-1-102 and 103; Governor's Policy Directive #9**

Revised: **July 1, 2017**

State employees can, should, and are encouraged to participate in the election process so long as assistance to candidates is rendered on the employee's own time and State property is not involved. Employees are not to endorse candidates, including the Governor, in their official capacity as State employees. A person's status as an employee of the State is public knowledge. Public endorsements of a candidate can easily be interpreted as endorsements of an official capacity. The legal provisions can be summarized as follows:

1. State employees are prohibited from engaging in partisan political activity during the hours they are performing work for, and being paid by an agency of State government.
2. Political banners, posters or literature should never be allowed to be displayed on or in any State office.
3. Political bumper stickers or decals should never be displayed on or in a State car. State vehicles must not be used during or after working hours to promote or assist the candidacy of any person in any way. State employees may not display political advertising on personal vehicles when using these vehicles in the performance of official duties for which they shall be reimbursed by the State.

No State official (whether elected or appointed) shall assess employees for any political purpose or use threats or coercion to require or persuade an employee to contribute to a particular candidate or cause.

Requests for leaves of absences to work in campaigns should be submitted to the employee's department director. Each director should establish an internal policy as to whether such leave without pay shall be allowed in that department.

An employer shall schedule the work hours of employees on election days so that each employee will have an opportunity to exercise the right to vote.

In addition to these prohibitions established by Arkansas law and by administrative policy, there are other specific limitations which apply to employees whose salaries are either partially or totally paid from federal funds. These rules are established by the Federal Hatch Act.

For specific questions about Arkansas Election Law consult the Secretary of State's Elections Division (501-682-1010). Questions regarding the Federal Hatch Act as it relates to federally-funded State employees may be answered by the Office of Special Counsel in Washington, D.C. (<http://www.osc.gov>)