

Political Activities Restrictions in Chapter 68: Relevant Law and Board Rules

§2601. Definitions. As used in this chapter,

10. "Elected official" means a person holding office as mayor, comptroller, public advocate, borough president or member of the council.

19. "Public servant" means all officials, officers and employees of the city, including members of community boards and members of advisory committees, except unpaid members of advisory committees shall not be public servants.

20. "Regular employee" means all elected officials and public servants whose primary employment, as defined by rule of the board, is with the city, but shall not include members of advisory committees or community boards.

22. "Supervisory official" means any person having the authority to control or direct the work of a public servant.

§2604. Prohibited interests and conduct.

b. Prohibited conduct.

2. No public servant shall engage in any business, transaction or private employment, or have any financial or other private interest, direct or indirect, which is in conflict with the proper discharge of his or her official duties.

6. No public servant shall, for compensation, represent private interests before any city agency or appear directly or indirectly on behalf of private interests in matters involving the city. For a public servant who is not a regular employee, this prohibition shall apply only to the agency served by the public servant.

7. No public servant shall appear as attorney or counsel against the interests of the city in any litigation to which the city is a party, or in any action or proceeding in which the city, or any public servant of the city, acting in the course of official duties, is a complainant, provided that this

paragraph shall not apply to a public servant employed by an elected official who appears as attorney or counsel for that elected official in any litigation, action or proceeding in which the elected official has standing and authority to participate by virtue of his or her capacity as an elected official, including any part of a litigation, action or proceeding prior to or at which standing or authority to participate is determined. This paragraph shall not in any way be construed to expand or limit the standing or authority of any elected official to participate in any litigation, action or proceeding, nor shall it in any way affect the powers and duties of the corporation counsel. For a public servant who is not a regular employee, this prohibition shall apply only to the agency served by the public servant.

9. No public servant shall,

(a) coerce or attempt to coerce, by intimidation, threats or otherwise, any public servant to engage in political activities, or

(b) request any subordinate public servant to participate in a political campaign. For purposes of this subparagraph, participation in a political campaign shall include managing or aiding in the management of a campaign, soliciting votes or canvassing voters for a particular candidate or performing any similar acts which are unrelated to the public servant's duties or responsibilities. Nothing contained herein shall prohibit a public servant from requesting a subordinate public servant to speak on behalf of a candidate, or provide information or perform other similar acts, if such acts are related to matters within the public servant's duties or responsibilities.

10. No public servant shall give or promise to give any portion of the public servant's compensation, or any money, or valuable thing to any person in consideration of having been or being nominated, appointed, elected or employed as a public servant.

11. No public servant shall, directly or indirectly,

(a) compel, induce or request any person to pay any political assessment, subscription or contribution, under threat of prejudice to or promise of or to secure advantage in rank, compensation or other job-related status or function.

(b) pay or promise to pay any political assessment, subscription or contribution in consideration of having been or being nominated, elected

or employed as such public servant or to secure advantage in rank, compensation or other job-related status or function, or

(c) compel, induce or request any subordinate public servant to pay any political assessment, subscription or contribution.

12. No public servant, other than an elected official, who is a deputy mayor, or head of an agency or who is charged with substantial policy discretion as defined by rule of the board, shall directly or indirectly request any person to make or pay any political assessment, subscription or contribution for any candidate for an elective office of the city or for any elected official who is a candidate for any elective office; provided that nothing contained in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit such public servant from speaking on behalf of any such candidate or elected official at an occasion where a request for a political assessment, subscription or contribution may be made by others.

RULES OF THE BOARD

Conflicts of Interest

RULES OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

TITLE 53

§ 1-02 Public Servants Charged with Substantial Policy Discretion.

(a) For purposes of Charter § 2604(b)(12) and § 2604(b)(15), a public servant is deemed to have substantial policy discretion if he or she has major responsibilities and exercises independent judgment in connection with determining important agency matters. Public servants with substantial policy discretion include, but are not limited to: agency heads, deputy agency heads, assistant agency heads, members of boards and commissions, and public servants in charge of any major office, division, bureau or unit of an agency. Agency heads shall:

(1) designate by title, or position, and name the public servants in their agencies who have substantial policy discretion as defined by this

section;

(2) file annually with the Conflicts of Interest Board, no later than February 28 of each year, a list of such titles or positions and the names of the public servants holding them; and

(3) notify these public servants in writing of the restrictions set forth in Charter § 2604(b)(12) and § 2604(b)(15) to which they are subject.

If the Conflicts of Interest Board determines that the title, position, or name of any public servant should be added to or deleted from the list supplied by an agency, the Board shall notify the head of the agency involved of that addition or deletion; the agency shall in turn promptly notify the affected public servant of the change.

(b) Each agency may make available for public inspection a copy of the most recent list filed by the agency, with any additions or deletions made by the Board pursuant to subdivision (a) of this section.

§1-03 Definition of Lesser Political Office than that of Assembly District Leader which may be Held by Members of the City Council.

For purposes of Charter §2604(b)(15), the definition of a political office which is a "lesser political office" than that of assembly district leader includes:

- (a) membership on a county committee;
- (b) membership on a county executive committee;
- (c) membership on a state committee; and
- (d) membership on a national committee.

§1-06 Definition of Primary Employment with the City.

(a) For purposes of Charter §2601(20), "primary employment with the City" means the employment of those public servants who receive compensation from the City and are employed on a full-time basis or the equivalent or who are regularly scheduled to work the equivalent of 20 or

more hours per week.

(b) "Primary employment with the City" shall not mean employment of:

(i) members of the City Planning Commission, except for the Chair;

(ii) interns employed in connection with a program at an educational institution or full-time students;

(iii) persons employed for a period not to exceed six consecutive months; or

(iv) persons employed on special projects, investigations or programs, in excess of six months but of limited duration, as the Board shall determine.

(c) For purposes of Charter §2601(20), the term "compensation" shall not mean reimbursement for expenses or per diem payments to members of commissions and boards.

§1-13 Conduct Prohibited by City Charter §2604 (b)(2).

(a) Except as provided in subdivision (c) of this section, it shall be a violation of City Charter §2604(b)(2) for any public servant to pursue personal and private activities during times when the public servant is required to perform services for the City.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (c) of this section, it shall be a violation of City Charter §2604(b)(2) for any public servant to use City letterhead, personnel, equipment, resources, or supplies for any non-City purpose.

(c) (1) A public servant may pursue a personal and private activity during normal business hours and may use City equipment, resources, personnel, and supplies, but not City letterhead, if

(i) the type of activity has been previously approved for employees of the public servant's agency by the Conflicts of Interest Board, upon application by the agency head and upon a determination by the Board that the activity furthers the purposes and interests of the City; and

(ii) the public servant shall have received approval to pursue such activity from the head of his or her agency.

(2) In any instance where a particular activity may potentially directly affect another City agency, the employee must obtain approval from his or her agency head to participate in such particular activity. The agency head shall provide written notice to the head of the potentially affected agency at least 10 days prior to approving such activity.

(d) It shall be a violation of City Charter §2604(b)(2) for any public servant to intentionally or knowingly:

(1) solicit, request, command, importune, aid, induce or cause another public servant to engage in conduct that violates any provision of City Charter §2604; or

(2) agree with one or more persons to engage in or cause the performance of conduct that violates any provision of City Charter §2604.

(e) Nothing contained in this section shall preclude the Conflicts of Interest Board from finding that conduct other than that proscribed by subdivisions (a) through (d) of this section violates City Charter §2604(b)(2), although the Board may impose a fine for a violation of City Charter §2604(b)(2) only if the conduct violates subdivision (a), (b), (c), or (d) of this section. The Board may not impose a fine for violation of subdivision (d) where the public servant induced or caused another public servant to engage in conduct that violates City Charter §2604(b)(2), unless such other public servant violated subdivision (a), (b), or (c) of this section.