



## Rules on Political Activities

**The New York City Conflicts of Interest Law, Chapter 68 of the NYC Charter, includes regulations regarding the political activities of NYC officers and employees. These rules were established:**

- To prevent superiors from coercing subordinates to engage in political activity.
- To ensure that no political party's agenda becomes confused with the public policy of any City agency.
- To prevent politicization of civil service positions.
- To make sure that public officials do not abuse their public positions for political gain.

**These rules apply to *all* City officers and employees, although certain high-ranking public servants are subject to stricter rules regarding their political activities. Other rules may apply to certain elected officials. Contact the Conflicts of Interest Board if you have questions about any of these rules.**

### **Q. Can I contribute to or volunteer for a political campaign?**

A. Yes. Being a public servant does not diminish your rights as an American citizen to participate in the democratic process. However, there are a few rules:

- You must perform all of your political activities on your own time.
- You must not use City letterhead, supplies, equipment, or personnel.

- You may not coerce or induce fellow employees to participate in or contribute to a campaign by threatening their job or by promising them a raise or promotion.
- You may not even *ask* subordinates to participate in or contribute to a campaign, whether you think you're being coercive or not.
- Your contribution may not be in return for your appointment or promotion as a public servant.
- If you are a high-ranking appointed official, you may not engage in fundraising for anyone running for City office, or any *current* City elected official running for *any* office.
- Employees of certain agencies may face additional restrictions. Check with your agency counsel to see if any apply to you.

**Q. Can I run for political office and still keep my City job?**

A. Yes, if you follow the same guidelines as above. But, if you are in a federally funded line, you may be subject to the Hatch Act, which would require you to quit your job in order to run for office. Contact your agency counsel for more information.

**Q. Does holding a high-level City appointment entail any additional restrictions?**

A. High-level appointed officials, such as deputy mayors and commissioners, who choose to run for City elective office are not allowed to fundraise for their own campaigns while maintaining their City positions. This essentially prevents most current high-level City appointees from running for City elective office.

**Q. Would I have to take a leave of absence in order to run for election?**

A. Many City employees would not have to take a leave. However, some employees, particularly provisional, exempt, and non-competitive employees, may be required by Mayoral Directive 91-7 to take a leave of absence during their campaign. For more information on this rule, or to see if it pertains to your position, contact the NYC Law Department. Click [here](#) to go to their site.

**Q. May I hold a position in a political party?**

A. Most City employees may hold a position with the political party of their choice. However, an elected official, deputy mayor, deputy to a citywide or borough-wide elected official, agency head, or other high ranking public official with substantial policy discretion may not hold certain positions with a political party. Also, under Personnel Order 88/5, management employees in mayoral agencies serving in unclassified, exempt, or non-competitive titles or serving provisionally in competitive titles are not permitted to serve as officers of any political party or political organization or serve as members of any political party committee, including political party district leader.

**Q. I got my current job as a result of my political activity. Do I have to continue such activity in order to keep my position?**

A. Even political appointees come under the law. No one can force you to engage in political activities if you don't want to. Every City employee should feel secure in his or her position without fear of retribution.

**Q. Can I work on political campaign and get paid do so?**

A. If your agency allows you to be involved with political campaigns, then yes. You may work on a campaign and get paid. You do not even need a waiver to do so. But remember, you may not represent the campaign to City agencies, you can't use any City time or resources for this work, and you may not request a subordinate to contribute in any way. Also remember that if your agency requires you to disclose any sort of outside employment, you will of course have to disclose this paid employment to your agency.

*FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT*

**NEW YORK CITY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD  
2 LAFAYETTE STREET, SUITE 1010  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
212-442-1400 (TDD 212-442-1443)**

**OR VISIT THE BOARD'S WEB SITE AT**  
**<http://nyc.gov/ethics>**

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