

Political Do's and Don'ts for Fire and Police Civil Service Employees

Employees holding a job or position in the fire or police civil service are bound by the prohibitions on Political Activity found in Article X, Section 20 of the 1974 Louisiana Constitution and R.S. 33:2504 or R.S. 33:2564.

The following activities are not considered prohibited political activities. However, the Office of State Examiner cautions that when there is a question, employees should consult your local civil service board to avoid any violation and its consequences.

You may:

- a. Serve as a poll commissioner or official watcher on behalf of a governmental entity at the polls.
- b. Publicly support or oppose issues of public debate or election other than in support of or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction.
- c. Sell services that you regularly offer or sell for fair market value to a candidate or political party or faction, even if doing so requires your presence at a fundraiser. However, you may not reduce or waive your fee for political reasons.
- d. Be a member of a private organization that may, under certain circumstances, endorse a candidate for public office, so long as the primary purpose of the organization is not the support or opposition of candidates, political parties, or factions.
- e. Attend a free function open to the public where all candidates are invited and any or all the candidates attend to speak or present their views.
- f. Attend an election night party (even before the polls close), but not after a primary election that is to be followed by a runoff election.
- g. Attend an inaugural celebration or a victory party after election night that is not a fundraiser.
- h. Express your opinion privately and cast your vote.

Prohibited political activity is defined generally as any effort to support or oppose a candidate for election or a political party in an election, whether the election is for a state, local, national or even out-of-state office. Because of the prohibitions in the State Constitution, (Article X, Section 20) and R.S. 33:2504 and 33:2564, you cannot voluntarily engage or be forced to engage in the following acts either directly or indirectly:

You may **NOT**:

- a. Become a candidate for nomination or election to public office.
- b. Be a member of a national, state or local committee of a political party or faction.



- c. Be an officer or member of a committee of any factional, political club or organization.
- d. Make any political speech or public political statement on behalf of any candidate seeking to be elected to public office.
- e. Make or solicit contributions for any candidate, political party or faction.
- f. Take any part in the management or the affairs of a political party, faction, candidate or campaign.
- g. Be elected to public office.
- h. Attend any fund-raising function of a candidate or political party or faction – even if someone gives you a free ticket. A function will be considered a fundraiser if it is advertised that anything – including food – will be sold at the function – even if you do not plan to purchase anything.
- i. Solicit votes for or against a candidate, political party or faction.
- j. Publicly announce, in writing or otherwise, support or opposition to a candidate, political party or faction.
- k. Prepare or distribute campaign material for or against a candidate, political party or faction.
- l. Contribute or volunteer time, effort, property, or anything of value in support of or opposition to a candidate, political party or faction.
- m. Display a bumper sticker on the vehicle you drive in support of or opposition to a candidate, political party, or faction.
- n. Place a sign on your property supporting or opposing a candidate or political party, or faction or allow anyone who is not your spouse to do so.
- o. Contribute or loan money in support of or opposition to a candidate, political party, or faction.
- p. Vote at the caucus or convention of a candidate or political party or faction.
- q. Wear, use, display or distribute t-shirts, hats, stickers, pins, fans, water bottles, or any other material in support of or opposition to a candidate, political party or faction.
- r. “Like” or “follow” a candidate, party or faction on Facebook, Twitter or other form of social media.

If an employee is found to violate either R.S. 33:3504 or R.S. 33:2564, the penalty for a first offense is a thirty (30) **working day** suspension. A second violation will result in dismissal. However, any employee who is found to be a candidate for nomination or election to public office shall be terminated on the first offense.

The Office of State Examiner strongly urges employees of the fire and police civil service to use caution and refrain from engaging in any action which can be perceived as political activity.