



## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Hatch Act**

### **What is the Hatch Act and who does it apply to?**

The Hatch Act is federal law whose main provision prohibits some government employees from engaging in some forms of political activity. The law applies to state and local government employees who work in programs financed in whole or part by federal loans and grants.

### **If I'm covered by the Hatch Act, what am I not allowed to do?**

Employees covered by the Hatch Act can't run for public office in partisan political elections; use your government position to interfere with election results or nominations; or solicit any political contributions while at work. You also can't participate in any political activity while at work.

### **What AM I allowed to do?**

A lot! Just make sure that whatever you do, you're making it clear that you're acting and expressing your opinion as an individual – not as a government representative. You can: join and be an active member of a political party; engage in voter registration drives; hold office in political clubs or parties; campaign for or against candidates and issues; contribute money to political organizations or candidates; and attend political fundraisers, rallies, or meetings.

And, of course, you can – and should – vote.

### **How does this affect my participation in union activities like rallies, strikes, or displays of solidarity at work?**

It doesn't. Participate in union actions and show your union pride both in and outside of work.

### **Can I contribute to COPE and collect COPE contributions from other SEIU members?**

You can contribute to COPE, and you can solicit other SEIU members for COPE so long as you do not supervise them and you are not on work time or at the workplace.

**This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited and permitted activities. If you have specific questions, or if you don't know which law(s) apply to you, ask your Union Steward or Business Agent.**



## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Civil Service Act**

### **What is the Civil Service Act and who does it apply to?**

The Civil Service Act is a law that defines the permitted and prohibited political activities and penalties for civil service positions and employees. It applies to any employees who hold a civil service position or are employees of local political subdivisions that have contracts with the state civil service commission for merit system services.

### **If I'm covered by the Civil Service Act, what am I not allowed to do?**

The Civil Service Act is more restrictive than the Hatch Act. Employees covered by this law are not allowed to actively participate in or manage political campaigns or parties; fundraise for partisan political campaigns or parties; run for partisan political office; engage in partisan voter registration drives; speak publicly or solicit votes or signatures for candidates; or engage in electoral work or volunteer activity on behalf of candidates or parties (poll watching or giving people rides to the polls, for example).

You also may not contribute – directly or indirectly – to a candidate or campaign while at work. And, of course, you can't use your official position to attempt to interfere with or affect the outcome of an election.

### **What AM I allowed to do?**

When you're off duty, not at work, and not in uniform, you can contribute to political campaigns; express your personal opinion on issues and candidates; display political signs or materials; attend political events and sign petitions; and advocate for or against issues or referendums, as long as they aren't identified with a political party. And you can – and should – vote!

### **How does this affect my participation in union activity at work?**

You can participate in any union activity that isn't explicitly connected to a candidate or partisan issue. You have the right to participate in displays of union solidarity, actions, and even strikes. You just can't wear an "SEIU Local 668 for [CANDIDATE]" shirt to work.

### **Can I contribute to COPE and collect COPE contributions from other SEIU members?**

You can contribute to COPE. You can solicit COPE contributions from other members so long as: you do so outside of the workplace, not on work time, and you do not talk about candidates while also soliciting for COPE.

### **If I'm temporarily off work on union leave, does the Civil Service Act still apply to me?**

It does not. If you are on leave of absence to work on union business, these restrictions do not apply to you.

**This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all prohibited and permitted activities. If you have specific questions, or if you don't know which law(s) apply to you, ask your Union Steward or Business Agent.**