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Office of Special Counsel Files Complaint for Disciplinary Action Against Department of Veterans Affairs Doctor for Violating the Hatch Act

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./November 27, 2009 – On November 23, 2009, the United States Office of Special Counsel filed a complaint with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) requesting that a doctor with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) be removed from her employment for engaging in political activity prohibited by the Hatch Act. An investigation recently conducted by OSC found evidence that the doctor, who works at a VA Medical Center in Illinois, used her authority and influence as a psychiatrist for political purposes and engaged in prohibited political activity in the VA workplace.

OSC's investigation into the doctor's activities found evidence that the doctor disseminated two e-mails, both encouraging recipients to vote for then-Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, to 84 individuals, including VA employees and patients.

Thus, OSC's investigation found evidence that the VA doctor violated two of the Hatch Act's prohibitions – the prohibition against using one's official authority or influence to affect the result of an election and the prohibition against engaging in political activity in a federal building. In order to fulfill its mission to safeguard the merit system, OSC has filed a complaint with the MSPB, seeking the doctor's removal from employment for knowingly violating the Hatch Act.

OSC is an independent investigative and prosecutorial agency with jurisdiction to enforce the Hatch Act. OSC is authorized to provide advisory opinions on the Hatch Act and enforces the provisions of the Act by investigating allegations of violations and filing petitions for disciplinary action such as the one described above. For more information, visit our website at www.osc.gov or call 1-800-85-HATCH.