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## OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL FILES COMPLAINT FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST NIH EMPLOYEE FOR VIOLATING THE HATCH ACT

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./January 27, 2010 – On January 22, 2010, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) filed a complaint with the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) requesting that an employee with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) be disciplined for engaging in political activity prohibited by the Hatch Act. An investigation recently conducted by OSC found evidence that the employee, who works for NIH in Maryland, solicited political contributions on behalf of a candidate for partisan political office and engaged in prohibited political activity while on duty and in the federal workplace.

OSC's investigation into the employee's activities found evidence that she disseminated an e-mail, while on duty and in a NIH building, to sixty-three individuals, including federal employees, requesting political contributions for then-Congressional candidate Fred Johnson. Additionally, the employee disseminated a second e-mail, while on duty and in a NIH building, to sixty-three individuals, including federal employees, inviting the e-mail recipients to a fundraiser for then-Congressional candidate Johnson. Furthermore, the employee hosted the fundraiser for then-Congressional candidate Johnson in her home.

Thus, OSC's investigation found evidence that the NIH employee violated two Hatch Act prohibitions – the prohibition against knowingly soliciting political contributions on behalf of a candidate for partisan political office and the prohibition against engaging in political activity while on duty and in a room or building occupied in the discharge of official duties by an individual employed by the Government of the United States. In order to fulfill its mission to safeguard the merit system, OSC has filed a complaint with the MSPB, seeking disciplinary action against the employee for knowingly violating the Hatch Act.

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*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 web site at [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov) or call 1-800-872-9855.*