

DoDD 1344.10, February 19, 2008

SUBJECT: Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces

A member of the Armed Forces on active duty may:

- Register, vote, and express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues, but not as a representative of the Armed Forces.
- Promote and encourage others to exercise their voting franchise, if such promotion does not constitute use of their official authority or influence to interfere with the outcome of any election.
- Join a partisan or nonpartisan political club and attend its meetings when not in uniform, subject to the restrictions of subparagraph 4.1.2.4. (See DoD Instruction 1334.1 (Reference (c).))
- Serve as an election official, if such service is not as a representative of a partisan political party, does not interfere with the performance of military duties, is performed when not in uniform, and the Secretary concerned has given prior approval. The Secretary concerned may NOT delegate the authority to grant or deny such permission.
- Sign a petition for a specific legislative action or a petition to place a candidate's name on an official election ballot, if the signing does not obligate the member to engage in partisan political activity and is done as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Armed Forces.
- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing the member's personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or a solicitation of votes for or against a political party or partisan political cause or candidate. If the letter identifies the member as on active duty (or if the member is otherwise reasonably identifiable as a member of the Armed Forces), the letter should clearly state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not those of the Department of Defense (or Department of Homeland Security for members of the Coast Guard).
- Make monetary contributions to a political organization, party, or committee favoring a particular candidate or slate of candidates, subject to the limitations under section 441a of title 2, United States Code (U.S.C.) (Reference (d)); section 607 of title 18, U.S.C. (Reference (e)); and other applicable law.
- Display a political bumper sticker on the member's private vehicle.
- Attend partisan and nonpartisan political fundraising activities, meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities as a spectator when not in uniform and when no inference or appearance of official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement can reasonably be drawn.
- Participate fully in the Federal Voting Assistance Program.

A member of the Armed Forces on active duty shall not:

- Participate in partisan political fundraising activities (except as permitted), rallies, conventions (including making speeches in the course thereof), management of campaigns, or debates, either on one's own behalf or on that of another, without respect to uniform or inference or appearance of official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement. Participation includes more than mere attendance as a spectator.
- Use official authority or influence to interfere with an election, affect the course or outcome of an election, solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue, or require or solicit political contributions from others.

- Allow or cause to be published partisan political articles, letters, or endorsements signed or written by the member that solicits votes for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause. This is distinguished from a letter to the editor as permitted.
- Serve in any official capacity with or be listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club.
- Speak before a partisan political gathering, including any gathering that promotes a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Participate in any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Conduct a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political club or group or distribute partisan political literature.
- Perform clerical or other duties for a partisan political committee or candidate during a campaign, on an election day, or after an election day during the process of closing out a campaign.
- Solicit or otherwise engage in fundraising activities in Federal offices or facilities, including military reservations, for any political cause or candidate.
- March or ride in a partisan political parade.
- Display a large political sign, banner, or poster (as distinguished from a bumper sticker) on a private vehicle.
- Display a partisan political sign, poster, banner, or similar device visible to the public at one's residence on a military installation, even if that residence is part of a privatized housing development.
- Participate in any organized effort to provide voters with transportation to the polls if the effort is organized by or associated with a partisan political party, cause, or candidate.
- Sell tickets for or otherwise actively promote partisan political dinners and similar fundraising events.
- Attend partisan political events as an official representative of the Armed Forces, except as a member of a joint Armed Forces color guard at the opening ceremonies of the national conventions of the Republican, Democratic, or other political parties recognized by the Federal Elections Committee or as otherwise authorized by the Secretary concerned.
- Make a campaign contribution to, or receive or solicit (on one's own behalf) a campaign contribution from, any other member of the Armed Forces on active duty. Any contributions not prohibited by this subparagraph remain subject to the gift provisions of sections 2635.301-2635.304 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (Reference (f)). See subparagraph 4.1.2.1. for general prohibitions on partisan fundraising activity.
- Commissioned officers shall not use contemptuous words as prohibited by section 888 of Reference (b) or participate in activities proscribed by DoD Directives 5200.2 and 1325.6 (References (g) and (h), respectively).