



SUBJECT: Political Activities	EFFECTIVE: July 2003 REVIEWED: August 2011 REVISED: April 2023
CATEGORY: 600 POLICY NUMBER: 600.5	CROSS REFERENCE:

Purpose

To make employees aware of what political activities are and are not allowed during work hours and how to respond when asked for help with a political campaign.

Definitions

Public employer: Includes any board, commission, committee, department, division or institution in the executive, administrative, legislative or judicial branch of state government, and any county, city, district or other municipal corporation or public corporation organized for a public purpose, including a cooperative body formed between municipal or public corporations.

Public employee: Includes any representative of a public employer including but not limited to full and part time paid staff, temporary staff, and contractors. "Public employee" does not include elected officials.

Scope

This policy applies to all city employees during their working hours.

Policy

Pursuant to ORS 260.432 -- Solicitation of public employees; activities of public employees during working hours -- the following shall apply to all City of Milwaukie employees.

- (1) No person shall attempt to, or coerce, command or require a public employee to influence or give money, service or other thing of value to promote or oppose any political committee or to promote or oppose the nomination or election of a candidate, the gathering of signatures on an initiative, referendum or recall petition, the adoption of a measure or the recall of a public office holder.
- (2) No public employee shall solicit any money, influence, service or other thing of value or otherwise promote or oppose any political committee or promote or oppose the nomination or election of a candidate, the gathering of signatures on an initiative, referendum or recall petition, the adoption of a measure or the recall of a public office holder while on the job during working hours. However, this section does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political views.

In our day-to-day work life, this means city employees cannot campaign for any candidate or

measure on the ballot during working hours. City equipment (including but not limited to telephone, fax machines, and computers) and materials (including but not limited to postage, paper, and other consumable office products) purchased with public funds cannot be used for any political purposes. Employees may express their personal political views by wearing campaign buttons during working hours.

Responsibilities

All employees

- Monitor use of time for political purposes.
- Notify supervisor when feeling unusual pressure from a candidate or committee.

Supervisors

- Monitor employees to ensure public funds are not being expended for political purposes.
- Notify the city manager or designees if an employee reports feeling any pressure by a candidate or committee to conduct political activities not permitted during working hours. A prohibited request by an elected official or other employer of public employees in the role of a supervisor, is an attempt to require the public employee to perform a political activity not permitted during work hours and/or with city resources.

Each public employer shall have posted in a conspicuous place likely to be seen by its employees the following notice in printed or typewritten form:

ATTENTION ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES:

The restrictions imposed by the law of the State of Oregon on your political activities are that “No public employee shall solicit any money, influence, service or other thing of value or otherwise promote or oppose any political committee or promote or oppose the nomination or election of a candidate, the gathering of signatures on an initiative, referendum or recall petition, the adoption of a measure or the recall of a public office holder while on the job during working hours. However, this section does not restrict the right of a public employee to express personal political views.”

It is therefore the policy of the state and of your public employer that you may engage in political activity except to the extent prohibited by state law when on the job during working hours.

Examples of Restrictions on Public Employees While on Work Time

1. Activities such as collecting funds, receiving or distributing advocacy materials, preparing correspondence for candidate or political action committees.
2. Assisting with candidate filing forms, reports or other correspondence.
3. Producing or distributing political documents advocating for a certain vote or press releases announcing an elected official’s support or opposition to a candidate, measure or petition.
4. Producing or distributing a news release that includes reasons why this candidate should be elected, the candidate’s goals if elected, or other supportive information.

Examples of Allowable Activities for Public Employees

1. Lunch hours and breaks, when the employee is considered off duty, the employee’s time may be used for political activities. This must be voluntary on the part of the employee. In case the employee’s use of work time is questioned, dates and times should be documented. Use of leave must be accurately reported to payroll.
2. Personal time such as evenings and days off as long as the employee does not feel coerced or obligated by their supervisor to take part in the campaign activity.
3. Wearing political buttons.
4. Doing research and survey work or holding public meetings as part of a planning phase prior to certifying a measure to the ballot.
5. Taking minutes of a public meeting that may include public officials’ discussion and reasoning for adopting a resolution or voting to support or oppose a measure.
6. Maintaining the public record or responding to citizen public records requests that involve political material.