



## Department of Human Resources

### POLICY & GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM

---

#### #2009-07: Political Activity

---

With the election approaching, it is important to understand what we, as public employees, may or may not do in support of political candidates or ballot questions. Massachusetts General Law Chapter 55 generally covers campaign finance, but also includes sections covering the rights and limitations of public employees and the use of public buildings.

Public employees (other than elected officials) may not:

- Sell or distribute tickets for a fundraising event to benefit any political candidate or political committee or solicit attendance at such an event;
- Otherwise ask for contributions to support any candidate or political committee (federal, state, county or local) or a ballot question;
- Host a political fundraising event;
- Accept donations or payment for admission at a political fundraising event or accepting money at the door of a political fundraising event;
- Sign a fundraising letter or advertisement on behalf of a candidate or political committee;
- Permit his/her name to be listed on campaign stationery as an officer, member or supporter, if the stationery is used to solicit funds for a political purpose;
- Provide persons raising money for a candidate or committee with the names of individuals who would then be solicited;
- Providing general or specific advice to a political campaign with regard to fundraising strategies

However, a public employee may:

- Make a contribution to a candidate or political committee or attend a political fundraiser;
- Serve as a member of a political committee or hold a committee position (other than treasurer or any other position that involves fundraising);

- Perform any service for a campaign that does not involve fundraising, such as holding signs, stuffing envelopes, signing endorsement letters (as long as those letters do not also ask for money) or working at political fundraisers in a non-fundraising capacity, such as setting up tables or preparing food (not collecting money at the door).
- Meet with anyone, including other public employees, for political purposes, as long as no fundraising activity takes place;
- Raising money for humanitarian, charitable or educational causes or other issues not related to elections.

The use of public buildings is more restrictive: No one may use a public building:

- to ask for or receive contributions to *any* political committee or candidate;
- as a return address for contributions or use a phone number in the building as a contact for buying tickets to a fundraiser;
- to post an advertisement or a circular selling tickets to a fundraiser or otherwise seeking contributions

Finally, no public resources (including paid time, telephones, computers, copiers, and/or office supplies) may be use for political campaign purposes.

A complete guide to campaign finance is available on the Office of Campaign & Political Finance's website at <https://www.mass.gov/advisory/11-1-public-employee-political-activity>.

Specific questions can be directed to the Office at (617) 979-8300.