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**From:** SECSTATE WASHDC  
**Action:** ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** 13526  
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**Subject:** 2020 Hatch Act/Political Activities

1. As the 2020 general election draws near, all Department employees are reminded to review and comply with the restrictions on political activities that apply to Department employees. As Deputy Secretary Biegun noted in his February 18, 2020, email, in its global engagements the Department proudly showcases the United States democratic process. It is important that the Department's employees do not improperly engage the Department of State in the political process, and that they adhere to the Hatch Act and Department policies in their own political activities.

2. The political activities restrictions are detailed in guidance that is accessible through links on the L/EFD political activities intranet page: <https://usdos.sharepoint.com/sites/L-EFD/Pages/PoliticalActivities.aspx>. The guidance is contained in three memoranda organized by type of employee: Presidential and Political Appointees, Career Senior Executive Service (SES), and all other employees. Employees should read the memorandum applicable to their employment status and follow the memorandum's guidelines if they plan to engage in the permitted political activities.

3. Consistent with the guidance, all Department employees may register to vote and vote, assist in non-partisan voter registration drives, contribute money to political campaigns, political parties, or partisan political groups, and express their opinions about policies and issues in a non-partisan context.

4. The Department works to advance the national interest abroad on behalf of all Americans in a non-partisan fashion. It is important to remember that in order to avoid any confusion or misperception in this regard, the Department's

longstanding policy is that U.S. citizen employees and family members may not engage in partisan political activity while posted or on TDY abroad, even on personal time. (3 FAM 4123.3) Similarly, Presidential and political appointees and career SES are subject to significant restrictions on their political activity; they may not engage in any partisan political activity in concert with a partisan campaign, political party, or partisan political group, even on personal time and outside of the federal workplace. The guidance outlines these restrictions in detail.

5. Certain restrictions on political activities apply to all employees. This includes prohibitions on personal fundraising for a candidate in a partisan election, using one's official position or official resources for partisan political purposes, or engaging in partisan political activity while on duty or in the federal workplace. When using personal social media, employees should avoid, at all times, referring to their positions when engaging in partisan political activity, they may not use their personal social media to engage in political activity while on duty or in the federal work place, and they may not post, forward, share, like, tweet, or retweet fundraising pages or content. No partisan content may ever be posted on an official Department of State media website. Federal employees may not use an official Department social media account to engage in political activity at any time, including to post, like, share, tweet or retweet a message or comment in support of or in opposition to a political party, candidate in a partisan race, or partisan political group. In the office, it is important to avoid conversation or actions that would be viewed as coercing other employees or encouraging support or opposition to a candidate, party, or partisan political group in future elections. Employees are reminded that while teleworking from home they are still subject to the Hatch Act's on-duty restrictions and therefore they may not engage in otherwise permissible political activities when they are on duty at home.

6. Other types of political activity are permissible for most employees in the United States. Greater detail is provided in the guidance.

7. The Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is charged with the administration of the Hatch Act. OSC training from a prior election cycle is available on BNET; there have been no changes in the law since then. The Office of the Legal Adviser for Ethics & Financial Disclosure also is available to assist with trainings or briefings for bureaus and posts on the Hatch Act and relevant Department policies. The Department also plans to send guidance for traditional overseas election night events later in the election season.

8. Questions about this guidance, or about political activities more generally, should be directed to the Ethics Attorney Mailbox at [EthicsAttorneyMailbox@state.gov](mailto:EthicsAttorneyMailbox@state.gov).

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