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GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

MARK A. COOPER
DIRECTOR

Political Activity
Policy Number: HR-0027

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Revised Date:

Approval:


Mark A. Cooper, Director

I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) to identify prohibited political activity for GOHSEP employees and establish procedures for those employees choosing to become a candidate for political office.

This policy does not grant, confer, or create a right to paid or unpaid leave for the purpose of becoming a candidate for political office.

II. APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all employees of the GOHSEP.

III. DEFINITIONS:

Political Activity

As defined in the constitution of 1974, and for the purposes of this Section, "political activity" means an effort to support or oppose the election of a candidate for political office or to support a particular political party in an election. Not included is the support or opposition of issues involving bonded indebtedness, tax referenda, or constitutional amendments.

Candidate

A GOHSEP employee becomes a candidate for political office when the employee solicits or accepts campaign contributions, publicly announces his/her candidacy for a specific political office, or qualifies for a political office.

IV. POLITICAL ACTIVITY:

Employees are free and encouraged to exercise their constitutional rights as citizens, to seek and hold public office, to cast their vote for whomever they please, and to express their opinions privately.

Political Activity prohibited while on duty or in any way appearing to represent the agency:

- Participate or engage in political activity, including his/her own or any other candidacy for election to public office.
- Make any political speech on behalf of any candidate, faction or party.
- Work on any political campaign on behalf of a position or candidate.
- Be a candidate for nomination or election to public office, except for the position of elected employee member of any national, state, or local committee of a political party, faction, or candidate.
- Be a member of any national, state, or local committee of a political party or faction.
- Take active part in the management of the affairs of a political party, faction, candidate, or any political campaign, except to exercise his right as a citizen to express his opinion privately, to serve as a commissioner or official watcher at the polls, and to cast his vote as he desires.
- Take active part in an effort to recall from office an elected public official, or seek, solicit or attempt to coerce any person including any employee of the GOHSEP into participating in any such effort or signing a recall petition except that nothing contained herein shall prevent an employee of the GOHSEP from signing a recall petition.

V. PROCEDURE:

Prior to an employee becoming a candidate for political office, the employee shall make a request to the Director to obtain authorization of one, or a combination of, the following:

- 1) to be allowed to use accrued leave, not to exceed one year or,
- 2) to be placed on a leave of absence, not to exceed six months.

Total leave time, if multiple options are chosen, must not exceed one year and is subject to the needs of the agency. The Director will first consider the potential

impact to the agency's mission to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all emergencies and disasters.

If the employee is authorized leave, then he/she may use available annual or compensatory leave or be placed on leave without pay for the appropriate period of time, in accordance with the leave rules of the agency.

The employee shall make clear that his/her political activity is unrelated to his/her public employment with the GOHSEP and is not a spokesperson for the agency.

VI. RESPONSIBILITY:

All employees are responsible for complying with all aspects of this policy.

VII. QUESTIONS:

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Office.

VIII. VIOLATIONS:

Employees found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.