

**COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH
POLICY #GC-09012
POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY**

Approval:		
	District Health Director	Date



1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish workplace rules regarding County Board of Health (CBOH) employees' engagement in political activities.

2.0 AUTHORITY – This Policy is published under the authority of CBOH and in compliance with the following:

- 2.1 O.C.G.A § 45-10-70
- 2.2 Hatch Political Activities Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 1501-1508
- 2.3 Georgia State Personnel Board Rule 478-1-.08
- 2.4 Opinion of the Attorney General Nos. 98-5 and 97-21

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the County Board of Health.

4.0 POLICY

Employees of the County Board of Health are encouraged to fulfill their civil obligations, vote, and otherwise engage in the political process on their own time. However, it is not appropriate for employees to engage in political activities while on duty, or to seek or hold certain elective or appointed political offices while employed with the CBOH.

Employees are personally responsible for understanding the limitations on political activity imposed by this policy and should seek advice from the CBOH District Health Director or Designee in case of doubt. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment.

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5.0 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1** An employee is on his or her **“own time”** when the employee is not engaged in performing work for the CBOH, not at an office or workplace controlled by the CBOH, and not at a meeting or function where the employee could reasonably be perceived by others to be on duty for or representing the CBOH.
- 5.2** An employee is **“on duty”** when the employee is engaged in performing work for the CBOH, or at an office or workplace controlled by the CBOH, or at a meeting or function where the employee could reasonably be perceived by others to be on duty for or representing the CBOH. An employee is presumed to be on duty during normal CBOH business hours during a day on which the CBOH is open for business, unless the employee has been previously approved for annual or personal leave.
- 5.3** **“Political activity”** includes organizing, promoting, supporting, advocating or soliciting support for a political party, or for or against any person’s campaign for appointive or elected office at the local, state, or federal level, including the employee’s own campaign. The term includes the display or distribution of campaign literature, buttons, posters, stickers, shirts, and the like.
- 5.4** HR – Human Resources
- 5.5** DHD – District Health Director

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1** HR is responsible for issuing and updating procedures to implement this policy.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 Political Activity Prohibited While on Duty.

Employees may not engage in political activities while on duty.

7.2 Political Activity Permitted on Employee’s Own Time

Except as limited in **Section 5.3**, employees may engage in political activities on their own time.

7.3 Limitations on Political Activity Permitted on Employee’s Own Time.

- 7.3.1** Even when engaged in political activities on his or her own time, the employee may not create or permit the appearance, by words, actions,

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or silence, that those political activities are endorsed or approved by the CBOH.

- 7.3.2** Employees may seek or hold any elective or appointed office of a political subdivision of this State, or of a political party or political organization of this State, provided that the office is not full time and does not conflict with the performance of the employee's official duties.
- 7.3.3** An employee who seeks an elected office at the federal level, or a full-time office at the state or local level, must obtain a leave of absence without pay prior to qualification as a candidate. The leave of absence will continue until the campaign is concluded by election or otherwise.
- 7.3.4** An employee must resign from the CBOH prior to assuming an appointed or elected office at the federal level, or a full-time office at the state or local level, or an office which conflicts with the performance of the employee's official duties for the CBOH.
- 7.3.5** Employees may not engage in political activities in an office or workplace controlled by the CBOH.
- 7.3.6** Employees may display political stickers or posters on their personal motor vehicles, so long as there is nothing on or in the vehicle to suggest that the vehicle or its owner are affiliated with the CBOH, and so long as the CBOH/State is not paying transportation mileage.
- 7.3.7** Employees may not retaliate against other employees for engaging in permissible political activities.
- 7.3.8** Employees may not solicit other employees for any political purpose.
- 7.3.9** Employees may not direct, manage, control or participate in a political campaign except for their own campaign or as otherwise permitted by laws and policy.
- 7.3.10** Employees may not serve as a watcher, challenger or similar partisan worker at the polls in any election.
- 7.3.11** Employees may not seek, use, or attempt to use any coercive political pressure to secure for themselves or any other person an appointment, promotion, increase in pay or any other employment advantage.
- 7.3.12** Employees may not use, directly or indirectly, any official authority or influence, to influence the political action of any other person or to affect the results of a nomination, campaign, or election to any public office or political party office.

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7.3.13 Employees may not personally and knowingly endorse candidates other than themselves or oppose candidates other than their opponents in elections for public office or political party office in a political advertisement, rally, broadcast, campaign literature, or similar means of mass communication.

7.3.14 Employees may not circulate a recall petition.

7.3.15 Employees may not transport any political campaign literature or matter, or engage in soliciting votes in any election or primary, while traveling in a vehicle upon which the CBOH/State is paying transportation mileage.

7.4 Federal Hatch Political Activities Act

CBOH employees may not:

7.4.1 Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office.

7.4.2 Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a state or local officer or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.

7.4.3 Notwithstanding Section 7.3.2 above, if the salary of the employee is paid completely, directly or indirectly, by loans or grants made by the United States or a Federal agency, then the employee may not seek partisan elective office at any level of federal, state, or local government.

8.0 REVISION HISTORY

REVISION #	REVISION DATE	REVISION COMMENTS
0	September 12, 2013	Initial Issue
	September 11, 2018	Annual Review
1	June 17, 2020	Annual Review and Revisions 5.4, 5.5, 7.2

9.0 FORMS

None