

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Employees and Officials of Jefferson Parish

FROM: John G. Dumas, MPA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Personnel Director

DATE: March 27, 2019

SUBJECT: Classified Employees:
Notice and Reminder of Prohibited Political Activities

It's important for employees to know and understand they have an affirmative obligation to abide by the "Prohibitions Against Political Activities" established in the Jefferson Parish Code of Ordinances, Part II, Chapter 23, Article 1-A and the Personnel Rules of the Classified Service. The Code of Ordinances and the Personnel Rules prohibit essentially all forms of public, partisan, and preferential political activity by employees in the Classified Service of Jefferson Parish. **The prohibitions apply to all classified employees and apply even if an employee is on leave.** Prohibitions against political activities serve to protect employees against assessments for political purposes and other involuntary, coerced political activities, and to prevent political activity on the part of employees from interfering with the efficiency of the Parish service.

Specifically, Rule XV of the Personnel Rules of the Classified Service states:

Section 1. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

- 1.1 No person shall be appointed to, promoted to, demoted from, or dismissed from any position in the classified service of the Parish or in any way favored or discriminated against with respect to employment in the classified service of the Parish because of his political or religious opinions or affiliations.
- 1.2 No employee in the classified service of the Parish shall, directly or indirectly, pay or promise to pay any assessment, subscription, or contribution to any political organization or for any political purpose except where such payment shall be dedicated and used exclusively for the support of issues involving bonded indebtedness, tax referenda, or constitutional or charter amendments. No employee in the classified service of the Parish shall solicit or take part in soliciting any assessment, subscription or contribution from any employee in the classified service for any political organization or for any political purpose.

- 1.3 No person shall, directly or indirectly, give, render, pay, offer, solicit, or accept any money, service, or other valuable consideration for or on account of any appointment, proposed appointment, promotion, or proposed promotion to, or any advantage in a position in the classified service of the Parish.
- 1.4 No appointing authority, or agent or deputy thereof, or any supervisor of any employee, shall directly or indirectly demote, suspend, discharge, or otherwise discipline any person in the classified service of the Parish for the purpose of influencing his vote, support, or other political activity in the primary, general, special, or other election; and no appointing authority, or agent or deputy thereof, shall use his official authority or influence, by threats, promises, or other means, directly or indirectly, to punish or coerce the political action of any employee in the classified service of the Parish.
- 1.5 No employee in the classified service of the Parish shall be a member of any national, state, or local committee of a political party, or any officer or member of any factional political club or organization, or a candidate for nomination or election to any public office, or shall make any political speech or public political statement on behalf of any candidate, faction, or party, as a part of any political campaign for the nomination or election of public officers, or shall take part in the management of affairs of any political faction or party, or in any campaign, except to exercise his right as a citizen to express his opinion privately, to cast his vote for whom he pleases, and to serve as a commissioner or an official watcher at the polls in any election.
- 1.6 No person elected to public office shall, while serving in such elective office, be appointed to or hold any position in the classified service of the Parish.
- 1.7 "Political Campaign," "Campaign" Defined:
As expressed in Section 1.5, "political campaign" or "campaign" 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. The support of issues involving bonded indebtedness, tax referenda, or constitutional or charter amendments by employees in the classified service shall not be prohibited. However, no public funds of, or administered by, or under the control of any Parish department, office, agency, special district, official or employee shall be used to print material or otherwise to urge any elector to vote for or against any proposition involving bonded indebtedness, tax referenda, or constitutional or charter amendments; and, no printed material, stationery, or official Parish letterhead, printed or purchased with appropriated public funds, shall be used to urge any elector to vote for or against any proposition involving bonded indebtedness, tax referenda, or constitutional or charter amendments. This section shall not prohibit the use of public funds for dissemination of factual information relative to a proposition appearing on an election ballot.
- 1.8 Acceptable Activities for Spouses of Candidates has been approved and added to the Rule which states as follows:

When the spouse of a classified employee is a candidate for election to public office, the classified employee may engage in limited activities to support the candidate spouse, notwithstanding the “prohibited activities” set forth in Section 1 above in its entirety. The classified employee may appear in a photograph with his or her spouse who is a candidate for elected office; serve as a host or hostess when the candidate spouse has a party in the couple's home; attend a fundraiser or other political/social events with his or her spouse and support the campaign while in attendance; and allow community funds to be used to support the campaign. However, the classified employee may not, under any circumstances, solicit contributions or political support, whether accompanying the spouse or not; place a bumper sticker supporting the spouse on the vehicle that the employee normally drives; wear, use, display or distribute fliers, t-shirts, hats, stickers, pins, etc., or any other material supporting the candidate, unless the employee is with the spouse at a political social event; and participate in any type of support of the spouse's campaign while at work or on duty.

What is “Political Activity?” Political activity means any effort to support or oppose a political candidate or political party in an election, whether the election is for a local, state, or national office. **Prohibited political activities include, but are not limited to:**

- Becoming a member of an organization that supports or opposes any candidate or political party;
- Purchasing a ticket and/or attending a party, gathering or other political events including fundraising events, political rallies, or election night events, etc.;
- Soliciting, accepting, receiving or making political campaign contributions;
- Soliciting votes for or against a candidate or political party or faction;
- Speaking at a political rally;
- Serving as a campaign volunteer;
- Engaging in any political activity through a medium sponsored or controlled by a political candidate, group or political party;
- Installing campaign signs;
- Displaying public support for a particular candidate or political party while attending community events;
- Publicly announcing in writing, social media, or otherwise, support or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction;

- Preparing or distributing campaign material for or against a candidate or political party or faction;
- Contributing or volunteering time, effort, property, or any other thing of value in support of or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction;
- Displaying a bumper sticker on the vehicle you drive in support of or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction;
- Placing a sign on your property supporting or opposing a candidate or political party or faction;
- Contributing or loaning money in support of or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction;
- Wearing, using, displaying, or distributing t-shirts, hats, stickers, pins, fans, water bottles, or any other materials in support of or opposition to a candidate or political party or faction;
- "Like" a candidate on any form of social media.

REPORT OF VIOLATIONS

Please note that all Parish officials and employees have a legal duty to report violations of Rule XV of the Personnel Rules of the Classified Service to the Personnel Board, and the Personnel Board is legally obligated and authorized to investigate suspected violations and to order appropriate disciplinary action. **Penalties may include dismissal from employment and a ban on future employment eligibility.**

If there are questions, concerns, or need for clarification, please direct calls to the Personnel Department at (504) 364-2730.