



POLITICAL ACTIVITY RULES

The political activity restrictions in Part V of the [Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006](#) strive to balance the neutrality of the public service with an individual's ability to engage in political activity.

Political activity includes the following activities:

- Doing anything in support of or in opposition to a political party or a candidate;
- Becoming or seeking to become a candidate in a federal, provincial, or municipal election; or,
- Making public comments on any matter dealt with in the position or policy of a political party or candidate if comments are outside the scope of the public servant's duties and the matter is directly related to his/her duties.

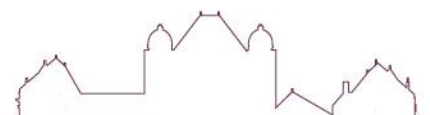
Public servants *cannot*:

- Engage in political activity in the workplace
- Use government premises, equipment or supplies for political activity
- Associate their position with political activity (unless as a candidate and then only to limited extent)
- Engage in political activity while wearing a government uniform

What can public servants do?

Most public servants can engage in political activity outside of work. However, the following activities can be done only when on unpaid leave of absence:

- Be a federal or provincial candidate
- Comment publicly on matters dealt with in the position or policy of a political party or candidate if comments are outside the scope of the public servant's duties and the matter is directly related to his/her duties
- Solicit funds – leave of absence requirement only applicable if public servant supervises others or deals directly with the public
- Activities that could interfere with the public servant's duties or conflict with the interests of the Crown or public body



Specially Restricted Public Servants

Under the Act, some public servants are designated as Specially Restricted, based on their positions. Specially Restricted public servants can **only**:

- Vote
- Attend an all-candidates meeting
- Be a member of a political party¹
- Donate money to a party or candidate¹
- Be a municipal candidate²
- Campaign for a municipal candidate²

The Integrity Commissioner may authorize part-time specially restricted public servants to participate in other activities.

Who are Specially Restricted Public Servants?

In Ministries:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Directors | • Assistant deputy ministers |
| • Deputy directors of a legal services branch | • Associate deputy ministers |
| • Crown attorneys | • Deputy ministers |
| • Commissioned OPP officers and commanders | • Secretary of the Cabinet |

In Public Bodies:

Appointees to the tribunals in [Ontario Regulation 377/07](#) are specially restricted public servants.

When in doubt, contact your Ethics Executive

For further information

Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario

ethics@oico.on.ca

416-314-8983 or 1-866-956-1191

¹ Except deputy ministers and the Secretary of the Cabinet.

² Only if authorized by Ethics Executive.

This summary is provided for information only. For the authoritative text, refer to the *Public Service of Ontario Act, 2006* and its regulations.

