

ETHICALLY SPEAKING...

OFFICIAL NEWS OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY ETHICS BOARD

DID YOU KNOW...

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. . . that Milwaukee County employees may support candidates of their choice in all elections and participate in campaign activities, **but are prohibited from doing so at their place of employment while engaged in their official duties?**

M.C.G.O. 9.06.

If you want to participate in campaign activities, you must **not** do any of the following:

- a) Wear or display any campaign material.
- b) Distribute any campaign literature.
- c) Solicit contributions for any candidate.
- d) Engage in political campaign activity for any candidate.
- e) Circulate nomination papers for elected office.



Additionally, coercion, reward, and retaliation for political activity is prohibited.

- a) You may not coerce contributions or services in support of or against a political party or candidate.
- b) You may not coerce contributions or services in support of or against a referendum.
- c) You may not reward or retaliate against an employee for refraining from participating in any political activity.
- d) You may not promise an appointment to any county position as a reward for political activity.



M.C.G.O. 23.09 “PETITIONERS, ELECTIONEERS”

Public areas of Milwaukee County facilities, such as the main hallway on the first and ground floor of the Courthouse, have traditionally been considered public areas. Non-disruptive campaign activities have been allowed in these places, in accordance with County ordinance 23.09, which states:

“Nothing in this chapter shall interfere, nor shall a permit be required of persons who solicit signatures for petitions or circulate nomination papers or engage in electioneering for any candidate, provided such activities are confined to corridors and hallways designated by the department head. Provided further such activity does not violate ch. 12, Wis. Stats.”

However, as identified in the “DID YOU KNOW ...” segment, above, **the Milwaukee County Ethics Code prohibits campaign activity in the workplace during work hours and while on duty.** Additionally, Milwaukee County Civil Service Rule VII, section 4 (qq) prohibits employees from “[e]ngaging in

pernicious political activity by making use of one's position to further the candidacy of any person **or engaging in political work during regular work hours.** Violation of this Rule is cause for discharge, suspension, demotion, or implementation of an employee reevaluation period. However, the Rule should **not** be "construed to interfere with the right of any employee in the classified service to become a member of a political club, to attend political meetings, to express his or her opinion on all political subjects, and to enjoy freedom from all interference in casting his or her vote."



REASONABLE GUIDELINES REGARDING POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Following are **guidelines** and **recommendations** regarding political activities at Milwaukee County:

- ⇒ Confine political activity to evenings, weekends, and scheduled lunch hours or, if during the normally scheduled work day, take time without pay or vacation time.
- ⇒ Refrain from prohibited political activity in your immediate work area during business hours.
- ⇒ Avoid interrupting co-workers with your political activities while your co-workers are working.
- ⇒ Do not engage in political activities with members of the public that you encounter while you are working.
- ⇒ Do not use County email or other County technology for purposes related to political activities.
- ⇒ Do not use County resources to engage in political campaign activities. (Examples of County resources include items such as letterhead and logos, office space and other facilities, and office supplies.)
- ⇒ A political bumper sticker on a privately-owned vehicle parked in a County parking lot does not likely constitute improper or illegal campaign activity.

When in doubt, ask, ask, ask! If you are unsure whether your actions constitute political campaign activities, speak with your supervisor for clarification before you proceed.



The Milwaukee County Ethics Board is located at 901 N. 9th Street, Courthouse, Suite 212, Milwaukee, WI 53233. This focused newsletter is produced as part of an effort to advance awareness of the Milwaukee County Ethics Board and Ethics Code, and to engage employees and officials in learning more about the importance of ethical behavior and sound ethical decision making in the business arena. Please direct any comments or questions to our office by calling or emailing us at:

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TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Milwaukee County has a "Use of Technology Policy" that also restricts campaign activities at Milwaukee County. County technology may include items such as email, internet access, websites, telephones, County-issued cellular phones, scanners and copy machines, and facsimile ("fax") machines. These types of items should **not** be used for the purpose of "engaging in any personal activities that may embarrass the County" or any "political campaign activities."

As a private citizen, you are free to engage in political activities on your own time and with your own resources!