

Hatch Act FAQ

Q: May federal employees express their views about current events, policy issues, and matters of public interest at work or on duty?

A: Generally, all federal employees may discuss current events, policy issues, and matters of public interest at work or on duty. The Hatch Act does not prohibit employees at any time, including when they are at work or on duty, from expressing their personal opinions about events, issues, or matters, such as healthcare reform, gun control, abortion, immigration, federal hiring freeze, etc. For example, while at work employees may express their views about healthcare reform, e.g., “I agree with healthcare reform.”

However, the Hatch Act prohibits federal employees at work or on duty from engaging in political activity. Political activity is activity that is directed at the success or failure of a political party, partisan political group, or candidate for partisan political office. Thus, employees may not express their personal opinions on such events, issues, and matters if such views also are political activity. For example, while at work employees may not express their views about healthcare reform tied to a candidate for partisan political office, e.g., “If you disagree with healthcare reform you should support candidate X.”

Finally, even when federal employees are expressing personal opinions that are permissible under the Hatch Act they should be mindful of how such views may be received by their coworkers and whether such comments are consistent with the Hatch Act’s underlying purpose of maintaining a politically neutral workplace.