

This is a “best practices” memo and is not an exhaustive list of the permissible or prohibited political activities.

The City Attorney and City Clerk should be consulted if there is a particular activity as part of the City business that raises any concerns or questions. The City Attorney does not provide legal advice to candidates for elective office or private citizens on campaign matters.

Practical Guide for City Council and Employee Participation in Political Activities

The *fundamental rule* is that Councilmembers and City employees may not use public funds, such as official City time, City facilities or other City resources to support or oppose a candidate and/or ballot measure.

CITY ELECTIVE OFFICIALS AND CITY EMPLOYEES MAY NOT:

Use public funds to oppose or support or attempt to influence the electorate on a ballot measure campaign.

Distribute campaign materials or literature through the City’s internal mail system.

Send or receive campaign related emails on City computers.

Place campaign materials or literature on the City’s website or on the City’s premises.

Create a link from the City’s website containing campaign literature or materials.

Use City copy machines, telephones, fax machines, computers, stationary or other City resources for campaign purposes.

Direct City staff to walk precincts, draft campaign ads, or carry out other campaign-related tasks during City employee compensated work time.

Urge City employees to vote for a candidate or ballot measure during City employee compensated work time.

Participate in political activities while in uniform.

Use City funds to attend a political fundraiser.

Directly or indirectly solicit campaign contributions from other local officials or employees, unless the solicitation is part of a general effort that incidentally includes local officials and employees. GC 3205.

CITY ELECTIVE OFFICIALS AND CITY EMPLOYEES MAY:

Use public funds to develop a measure for the ballot to represent to the City Council for legislative action.

Use public funds to prepare and disseminate an accurate, fair and impartial analysis of a ballot measure.

Use public funds to lobby the state legislature to aid or prevent passage of state legislation that will affect the City as directed by City Council. GC 50023.

Have City Council adopt a resolution to support or oppose a ballot measure at an open meeting that does not expressly advocate the passage or defeat of the ballot measure.

Take a position or work on a campaign during his or her personal time.

Make a campaign contribution to a candidate or local ballot measure with his or her personal funds.

Attend a campaign fundraiser at his or her personal expenses during personal time.

Make public appearances during his or her personal time to advocate a ballot measure or candidate.

Participate in campaign activities at City facilities that are open and available for expression of all political viewpoints, such as sidewalks, parks and areas in front of City Hall during his or her personal time.

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