

## Political Participation & Social Media

Service members may express personal opinions on political issues or candidates on social media, but...

If your social media page or post identifies you as an active-duty service member, then you should clearly and prominently state that the views expressed do not represent the DoD or your branch of service.

### Facebook

Service members may become “friends” or “like” a Facebook page or “follow” the twitter account of a political party or partisan political candidate.

Service members may NOT suggest others “like,” “Friend,” or “follow” the political party, partisan political candidates, group or cause.

Service members may NOT post direct links to political parties, partisan candidates, campaigns, groups (this is the equivalent of distributing campaign literature on behalf of the individual party).

Service members may NOT comment on pages or send “tweets” to political parties or partisan candidates (this qualifies as engaging in partisan political activity through a medium sponsored or controlled by political entities).

### References:

DoD Directive 1344.10  
DoD Instruction 1334.01  
DoD Instruction 1325.06  
Joint Ethics Regulation  
MARADMIN 603/15



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Produced by  
Regional Civil Law Office – West

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*ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY*  
***POLITICAL***  
***ACTIVITIES***

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# ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

This pamphlet provides a brief overview of regulations for participating in political activities as a member of the Armed Forces on active duty. The separation between political activities and the federal government is particularly crucial when involving the Armed Forces because of the importance of public confidence in civilian control over the military.

## Generally

Service members may express personal opinions on political issues or candidates but their conduct may not imply or appear to imply official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement by the DoD. Service members also must not engage in partisan political activity.

## Partisan vs. Nonpartisan

Partisan activities relate to candidates or issues representing national or state political parties.

Nonpartisan activities are not associated with a national or state political party but involve “stand alone” political issues, such as constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances, etc.

### Attending Partisan Political Events? Yes

Service members may attend a partisan event or political fundraising activity, meeting, rallies, debates or conventions.

Service members may join partisan clubs and attend meetings when not in uniform and when no inference or appearance of DoD sponsorship.

### Participating in Partisan Events? No

Service members may not participate in partisan political fundraising activities, rallies, and conventions.

Service members may not speak before a partisan political gathering, including any gathering that promotes a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.

## Uniform Guidelines

Service Members may never wear the uniform when participating in activities that imply service sanction and during or in connection with:

Unofficial public speeches, interviews, picket lines, marches, rallies, demonstrations, political activities, private employment or commercial interests, or when there may be an inference of sponsorship.

## Active-Duty Members May:

Register, vote, and express opinions on political candidates and issues (but not as a representative of the Armed Forces).

Make monetary contributions to a political organization.

Serve as an election official, if such service is not as a representative of a partisan political party, does not interfere with military duties, is performed while out of uniform, and has the prior approval of the Secretary of the Air Force.

Promote and encourage other military members to exercise voting rights, if such action does not attempt to influence or interfere with the outcome of an election.

Sign a petition for specific legislative action or a petition to place a candidate’s name on an official election ballot.

Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing personal views on public issues or political candidates, if such action is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign.

Display a political sticker on a private vehicle.

Communicate with his or her elected representatives.

## Active-Duty Members May Not:

Use his or her official authority or influence to interfere with an election, affect the course or outcome of an election, solicit votes for a particular candidate or issue, or solicit or require political contributions from others.

Participate in partisan political management, campaigns, or conventions.

Make campaign contributions to another member of the Armed Forces or an employee of the federal government.

Allow publication of partisan political articles signed or written by the member that solicits votes for or against a partisan political party or candidate.

Serve in an official capacity or be listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club.

Participate in any radio, television, or other program or group discussion as an advocate of a partisan political party or candidate.

Perform clerical or other duties for a partisan political committee during a campaign or on Election Day.

Solicit or fundraise in federal offices, facilities, or military reservations for a partisan political cause or candidate.

Solicit or fundraise in uniform or using official title for a partisan political cause or candidate.

March or ride in a partisan political parade.

Display a large political sign, banner, or poster (as distinguished from a bumper sticker) on the top or side of a private vehicle.

Attend partisan political events as an official representative of the Armed Forces.

Send political e-mails from government e-mail or use official title in a political e-mail.