



Policy 605

Subject	
POLITICAL ACTIVITY	
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By Order of the Police Commissioner

POLICY

1. **Constitutional Rights.** It is the policy of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) to support the constitutionally protected rights of its members to participate in Political Activity on their off-duty time.
2. **Protection.** To avoid possible appearances of impropriety, it is paramount that all members adhere to the guidance provided in this policy, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

DEFINITIONS

Political Activity — Activity directed toward the success or failure of a political party, candidate for partisan political office, or partisan political group (e.g., campaigning, handing out fliers or promotional materials, promoting or staging opposition for/against a candidate for office, fundraising, etc.).

Authorized Activity

Members of the BPD may:

1. Seek elective office in a partisan election.
 - 1.1. Be sensitive to ethical considerations in a decision to seek political office, including the potential violation of conflict of interest provisions.
 - 1.2. Ensure the campaign is conducted in a manner that would not bring discredit to the BPD.
2. Exercise their right of suffrage.
 - 2.1. Members are encouraged to exercise their right of suffrage off-duty.
 - 2.2. If a member cannot exercise their right of suffrage off-duty, they shall be provided with sufficient on-duty time.
3. Endorse a candidate as a citizen but not as a police officer or member of the BPD in any official capacity. Engaging in any Political Activity for a candidate must be conducted during off-duty hours only, without the use of BPD uniforms, equipment, or resources.

4. Testify as a citizen in any hearing on behalf of or in opposition to any local, state, or federal legislation, provided:
 - 4.1. The member does not wear or otherwise display or use a BPD badge, uniform, vehicle, or any other piece of BPD equipment, and
 - 4.2. The member does not represent themselves as a spokesperson for the BPD.

Unauthorized Activity

Members of the BPD shall not:

1. Participate in Political Activity while acting as a representative of the BPD when on-duty.
2. Wear or use a BPD uniform or BPD vehicle for Political Activity on-duty or off-duty, unless exercising your right of suffrage while on-duty or travelling to/from a duty assignment.
3. Use their official title, rank, or BPD affiliation in any capacity while engaging in Political Activity or while expressing personal political opinions.
4. Use their official authority or influence to interfere or affect the results of an election or a nomination to an office.
5. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, advise or promise to reward another member or employee to pay, lend or contribute anything of value for a political purpose.
6. Direct or coerce subordinates to assist in Political Activity.

RESCISSION

Remove and destroy/recycle Police Commissioner's Memorandum 17-02, *Political Activity*, dated 11 November 2002.

ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Policy 302, *Rules and Regulations*
Policy 602, *Public Speech*

COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

This policy is effective on the date listed herein. Each employee is responsible for complying with the contents of this policy.